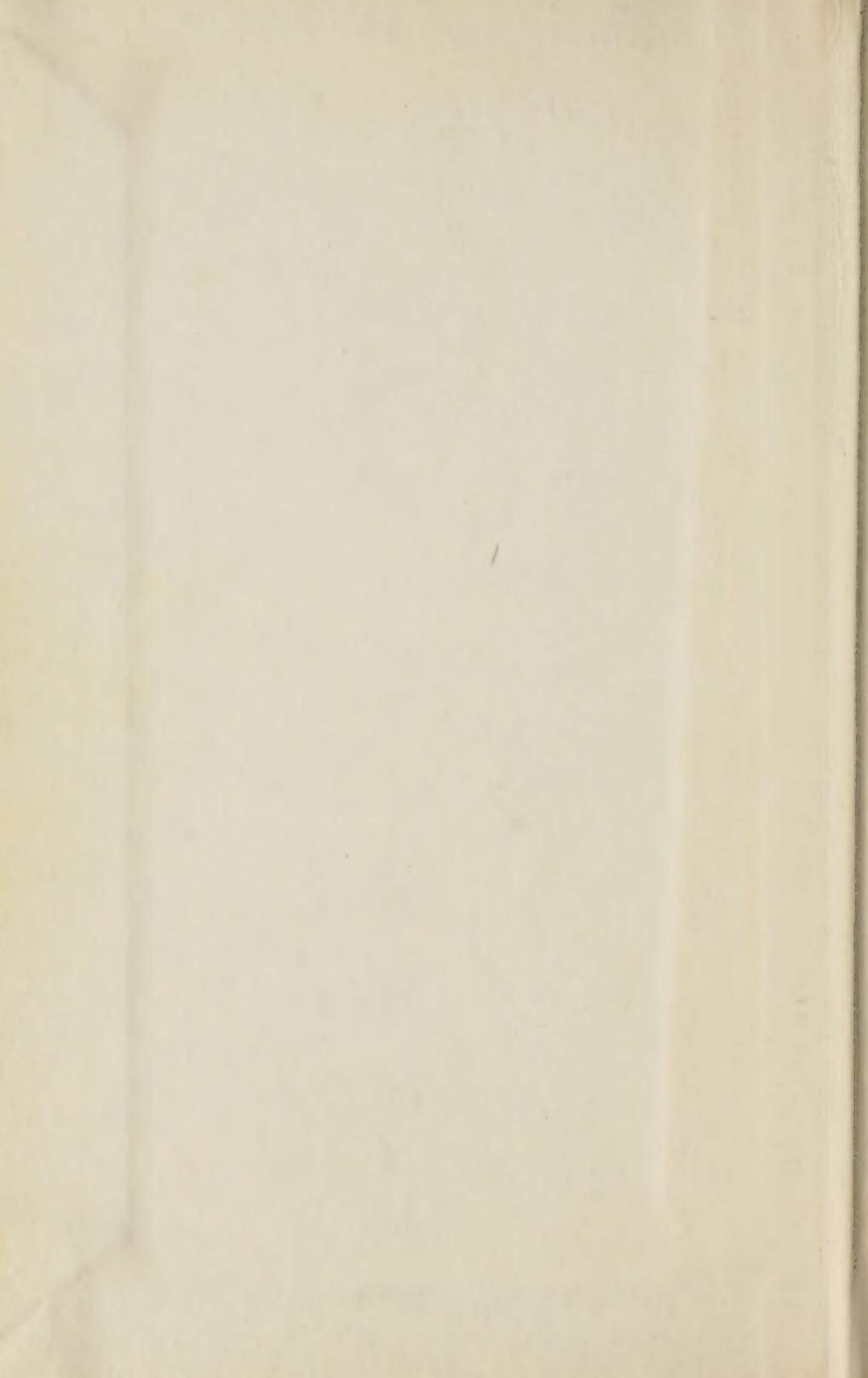


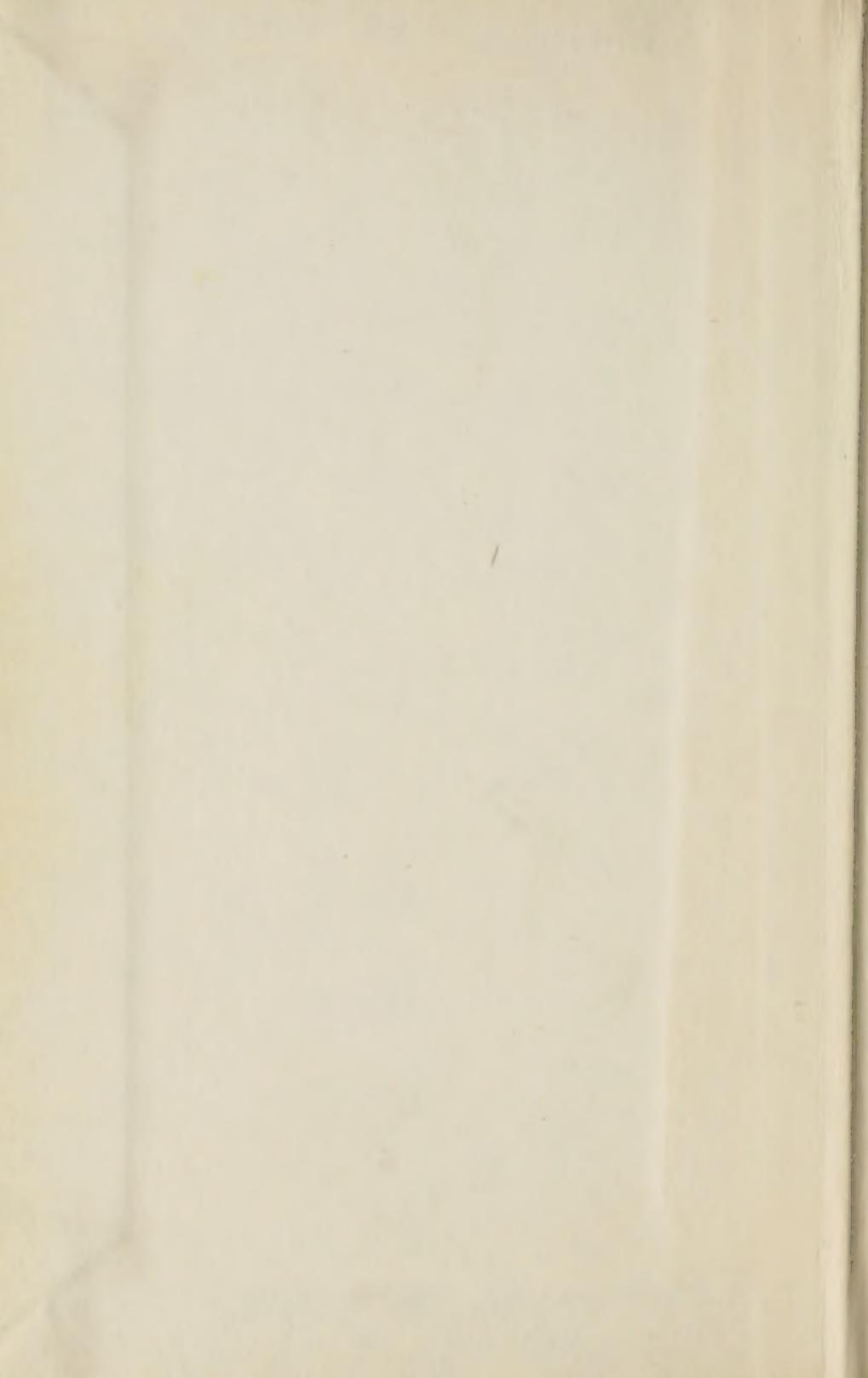
UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



3 1761 01922979



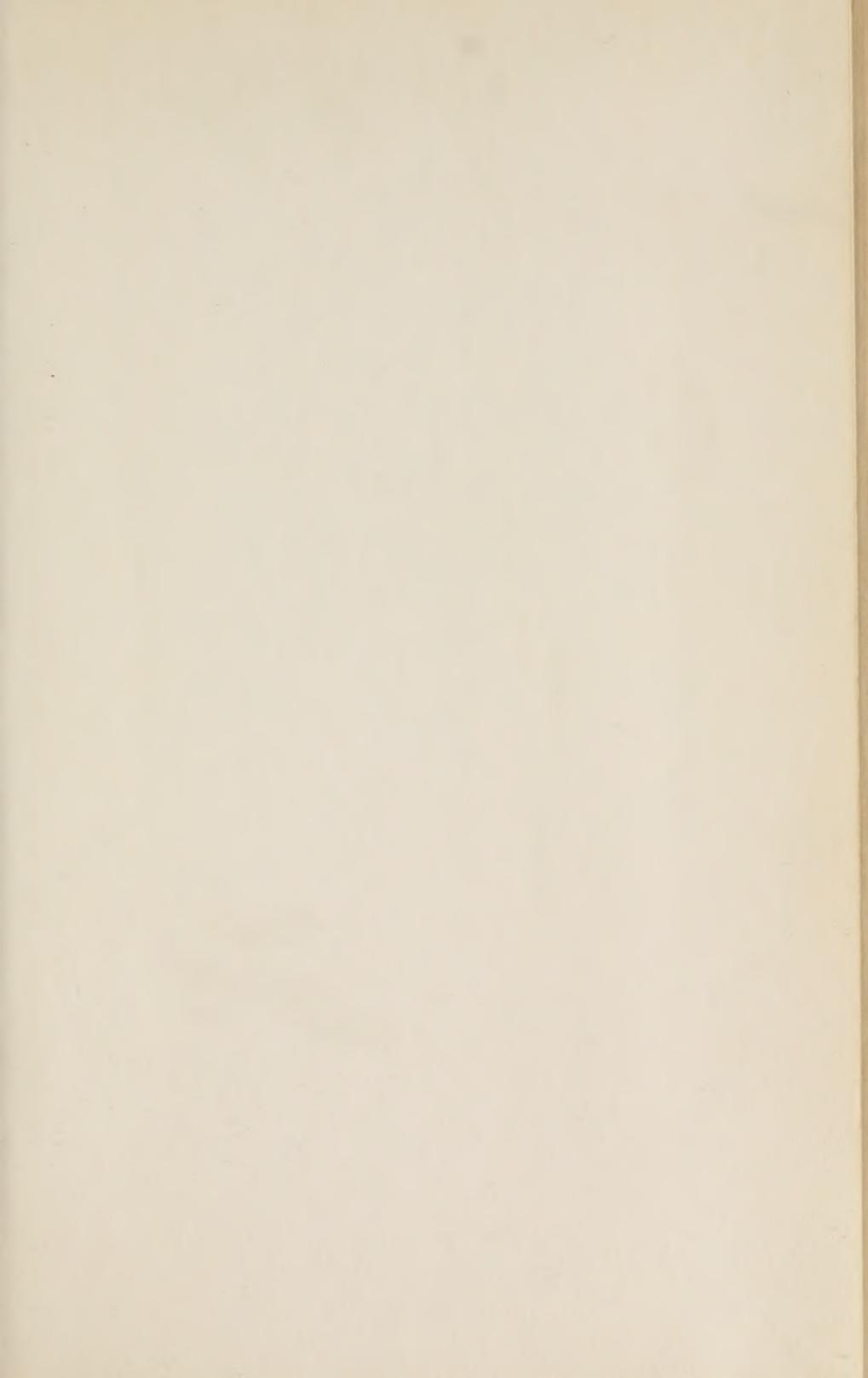


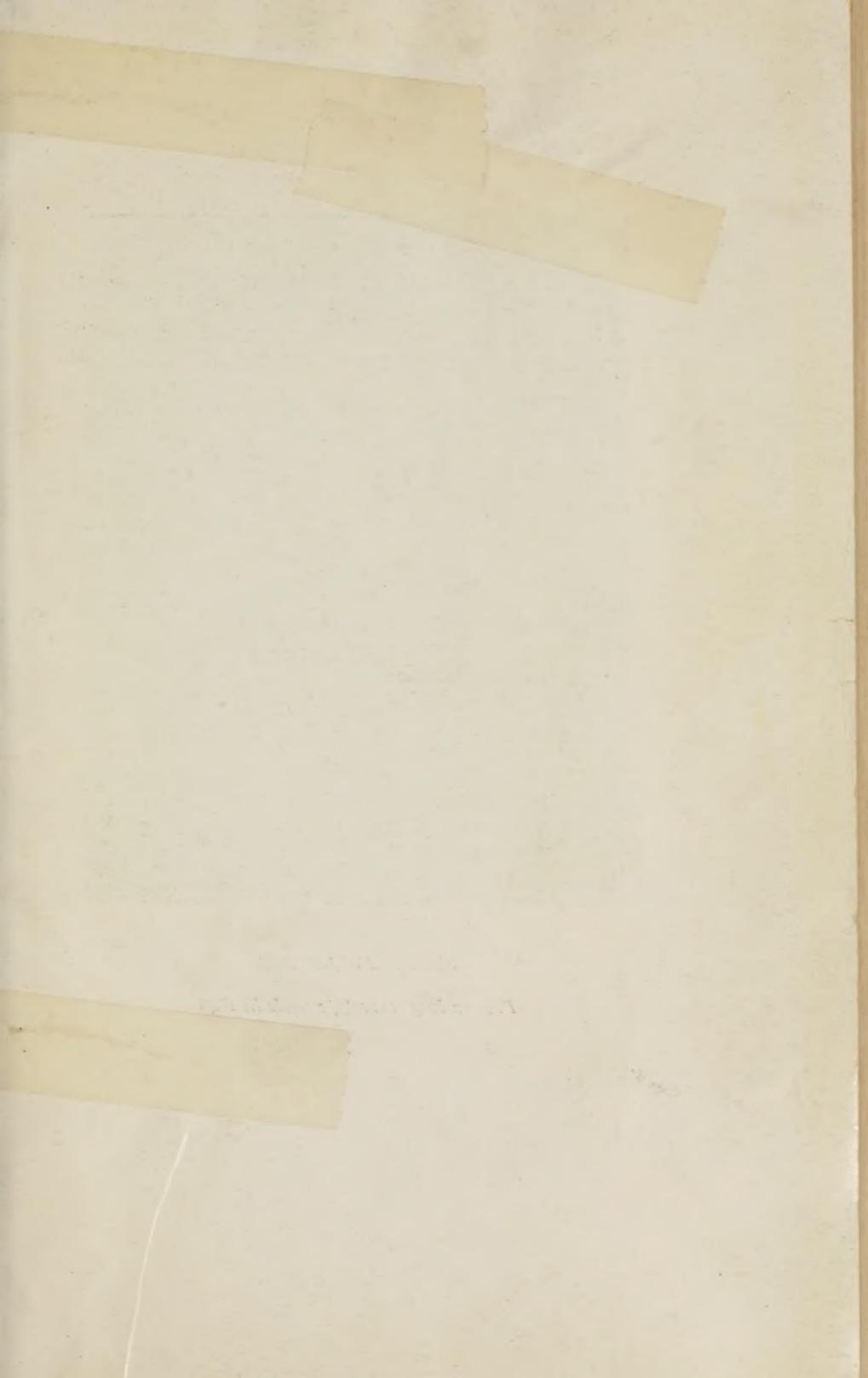


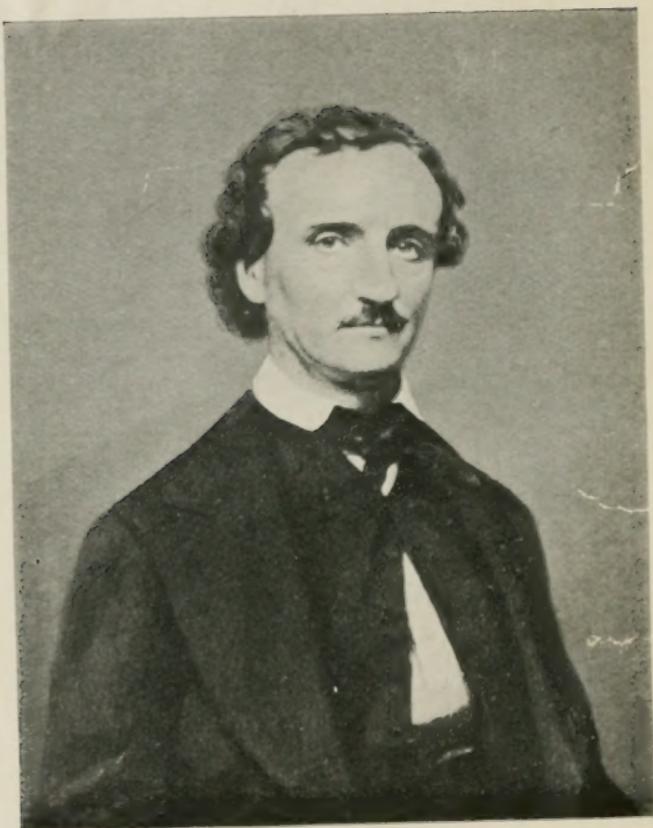




Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation







EDGAR ALLAN POE

From a Daguerreotype made in 1848

OXFORD EDITION

THE COMPLETE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE
WITH THREE ESSAYS ON POETRY

*EDITED FROM THE ORIGINAL EDITIONS
WITH MEMOIR, TEXTUAL NOTES, & BIBLIOGRAPHY*

BY

R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON



HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK
TORONTO MELBOURNE CAPE TOWN BOMBAY

1919



ANV 28 1940

PRINTED IN ENGLAND
AT THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

PREFACE

THOUGH Poe was constantly reprinting and revising his poems, there is in most cases no difficulty about deciding upon the text which must be accepted as final. It has been observed that, except in one case, Poe never returned to an earlier reading, and we must therefore obviously accept, for such poems as occur therein, the latest edition published during his lifetime—that of 1845. Of this volume, moreover, Messrs. Edmund Clarence Stedman and George Edward Woodberry, editors of the *Works of Edgar Allan Poe* in ten volumes, were fortunate enough to find a copy, ‘recently bequeathed by James Lorimer Graham, Esq., to the Century Association,’ which is enriched by marginal notes in Poe’s handwriting ‘for the purpose of being incorporated in later editions’. By the courtesy of Messrs. Duffield & Co., ‘publishers of the Stedman-Woodberry edition, copyright 1894,’ we have been enabled to incorporate this valuable material.¹

The Raven and other Poems, by Edgar A. Poe, 1845, contained the bulk of its author’s work in this kind, and has been here reprinted, with preface and dedication, precisely as issued, except for the poems revised

¹ An edition of this work was also issued in England by Messrs. Lawrence & Bullen, who have kindly confirmed Messrs. Duffield’s permission.

after the Lorimer Graham copy, which are marked by an asterisk in our list of contents.

Presumably it represents all that Poe was most anxious to preserve; but posterity without doubt will 'ask for more', and an editor can feel no hesitation in including everything now discoverable.

We have first, then, a few poems from the early volumes not reprinted in 1845. For *Tamerlane and other Poems*, 1827, we have, like all our predecessors, followed Mr. R. H. Shepherd's reprint (George Redway, 1884), noting his 'emendations' in the Notes. For the text of '1829' and 1831 we have accepted the transcripts in Messrs. Duffield's edition of *The Works*, the original volumes not being in the British Museum.

Poems published after '1845' seem to me best printed from *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, in two volumes, edited by R. W. Griswold, 1850. His text is almost identical with that of the magazines or papers in which they first appeared, and has the authority of one who, whatever his prejudices, had full access to the poet's manuscripts and was, apparently, a careful and experienced editor.

In reprinting from these volumes of 1827, 1845, and 1850, I have deliberately returned to Poe's own, somewhat erratic but clearly intentional, punctuation, and observed his frequent use of dashes and italics. His own 'Notes' are given, as he printed them, with the poems themselves; and I have supplemented the main contents by a few complete copies of earlier versions, varying so extensively from the final texts as to be almost different poems. Many of them, in fact, were published, and have been reprinted, under different titles.

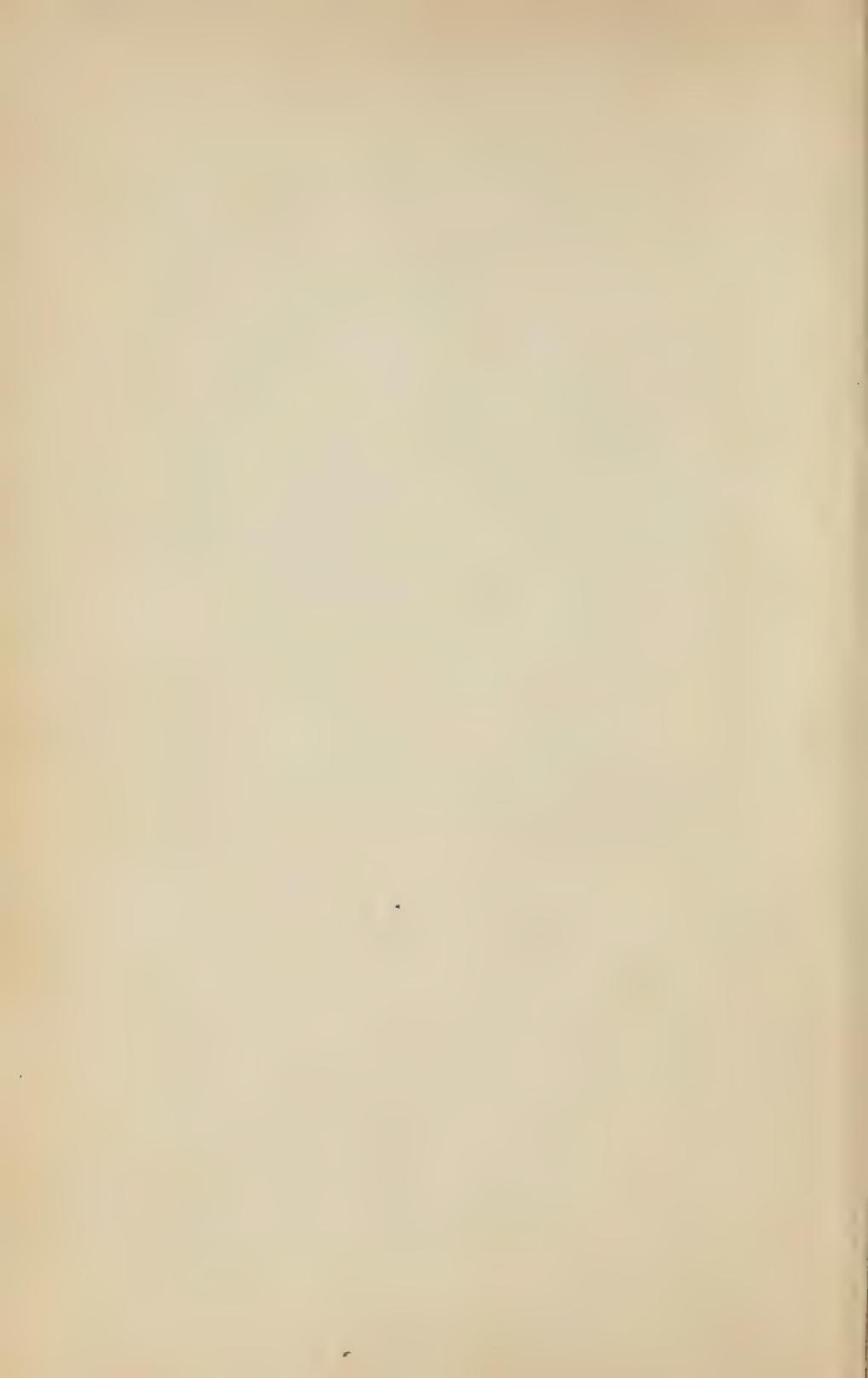
The textual notes do not present an exhaustive 'variorum' edition. They record only significant variations from important sources,¹ but we believe that no point of vital interest has been overlooked. They certainly offer a remarkable example of care bestowed during a lifetime on work nearly always musical in form, and yet constantly thus growing more word-perfect.

The Bibliography reveals the exact progress of Poe's poetical development, and the three remarkable essays on different aspects of Poetry, (reprinted from 'Griswold', with quotations revised by the original issues,) afford a most striking comment on his work, supplementing, moreover, the 'Letter to Mr. B——' (p. xl ix) issued by way of Preface to the 'Poems' of 1831.

R. B. J.

¹ Including some early MSS., formerly in the possession of L. A. Wilmer, and first printed in Messrs. Duffield's Edition.

PS
2605
36



CONTENTS

	PAGE
MEMOIR	xi
BIBLIOGRAPHY	xlv

POEMS PUBLISHED BEFORE 1845

AND NOT INCLUDED IN THE EDITION OF THAT YEAR

a. From *Tamerlane and other Poems*, 1827.

'The Happiest Day, the Happiest Hour'	3
Stanzas ('In youth have I known one with whom the Earth')	4
Evening Star	6
Dreams	7

b. From *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane and Minor Poems*, 1829.

Spirits of the Dead	9
To M—	11

THE RAVEN, AND OTHER POEMS, 1845

Dedication	15
Preface	16
✓ The Raven	17
The Valley of Unrest	24
*Bridal Ballad	25
✓ The Sleeper	27
The Coliseum	29
✓ Lenore	31
Catholic Hymn	33
✓ Israfel	34
✓ Dreamland	36
Sonnet—to Zante	38
✓ The City in the Sea	39
✓ No one in Paradise	41
Eulalie—a Song	42

	PAGE
To F—s S. O—d	43
To F—	44
Sonnet—Silence	45
The The Conqueror Worm	46
L The Haunted Palace	48
Scenes from 'Politian'	51

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Sonnet—to Science	81
Al Aaraaf	82
Poe's Notes to 'Al Aaraaf'	96
Tamerlane	100
A Dream	108
Romance	109
Fairy-land	110
To— ('The bowers whereat, in dreams, I see ')	112
To the River —	113
The Lake—To —	114
Song	115
P Helen ('Helen, thy beauty is to me')	116

FROM THE WORKS OF THE LATE E. A. POE
(GRISWOLD, 1850), AND ALONE

To M. L. S.	119
An Enigma	120
A Valentine	121
A Annabel Lee	122
L The Bells	124
Eldorado	128
U Ulalume	129
T Helen ('I saw thee once—once only—years ago')	133
To — —	136
For Annie	137
To my Mother	141
A Dream within a Dream	142
Alone (<i>Scribner's Magazine</i> , 1875)	143

OTHER TEXTS FOR SOME OF THE POEMS

	PAGE
Spirits of the Dead (Visit of the Dead, 1827)	147
The Valley of Unrest (The Valley Nis, 1831)	148
The Sleeper (Irene, 1831)	150
Lenore (A Paean, 1831)	153
Lenore (1843 text)	155
Israfel (1831 text)	157
The City in the Sea (The Doomed City, 1831)	159
Tamerlane (1827 text)	161
Poe's Notes to 1827 text	174
<i>A</i> Romance (Introduction, 1831)	177
Fairy Land (1831 text)	180
The Lake (1827 text)	183
The Bells (First Draft)	184
Note on the same	184
To ——— (To Marie Louise, MS. text)	186
A Dream within a Dream (Imitation, 1827)	188
A Dream within a Dream (To ——, 1829)	189
NOTES—MAINLY TEXTUAL	191
INDEX TO FIRST LINES	208

ESSAYS ON POETRY

The Poetic Principle	211
The Philosophy of Composition	241
The Rationale of Verse	259

MEMOIR

Poe once wrote to Lowell: ‘You speak of “an estimate of my life”, and, from what I have already said, you will see that I have none to give. I have been too deeply conscious of the mutability and evanescence of temporal things to give any continuous effort to anything—to be consistent in anything. *My life has been a whim—impulse—passion—a longing for solitude—a scorn of all things present in an earnest desire for the future.*’

How then shall we describe a ‘whim’, an ‘impulse’, or a ‘passion’—standing for ‘life’? The biographers of Poe have been many and of varying mood; the truth about many significant episodes in his career remains obscure: the man eludes analysis. There was, in fact, no entirely sane, harmonious personality uniting and ruling the diverse burning forces of his disordered nature.

The ‘poet’ speaks through his verse, once so happily defined by Mr. Andrew Lang as ‘the echo of a lyre from behind the hills of death’. It reveals a very patient and cunning craftsman, prone to melancholy and thoughts of the grave, intent above all things on extracting the witchery of music from words. Morality or action do not concern him: thought and even feeling are strictly limited: love

with him spells always regret. Yet here is real magic. Through the management of sound he proves himself practically always in the right. The suggestion intended is actually conveyed as no other words and no other arrangement of words could convey it. His mastery does not depend upon tricks of metre, but on a perfect ear, the instinctive sympathy between music and words. Even the length of his lyrics seems determined rather by sound than by sense; they never weaken or curtail the impression. At times Poe had nothing to say, and said it ungrammatically. Thus to retain poetic form, despite nature and the canons of art, bespeaks genius given to him almost alone.

In the more popular of the immortal *Tales* Poe speaks, it would almost seem, a different language. True, we still find the patient craftsman, the master of words: but all is clear, decisive, and, after a certain unique manner, simply direct. The subjects, however gruesome and bizarre, command immediate attention: no one can doubt their meaning or deny their interest. If fantastic in detail, they touch chords of universal humanity and reflect normal acuteness. They are obviously written by a man very much alive to affairs, of keen and penetrating mental balance: an artist but not a dreamer.

Finally we meet Edgar Allan Poe in the flesh: the hack-writer and savage critic; the projector of new magazines; the prophet of his own gospel; the tender and affectionate husband; the victim of a drug habit. We see him by turns proud in poverty and abject in his appeals for sympathy; confident in his own powers and childishly sensitive to criticism; mourning

eternally over the beloved dead, and on his knees before two gentlewomen at once in search of a second wife. We are troubled, dissatisfied, and not very certain of our ground here. Facts themselves are often misleading, and not always easy to disentangle from rumours maliciously magnified. Jealousy has been at work, also, and the official record was notoriously coloured by spite. The man was an artist and moody: he may not have always spoken the truth or meant what he said. Honourable attempts, however, have been made to vindicate the poet's memory, to verify or refute statements, and we may make something of what stands out established.

The romance of enthusiasm has credited Poe's family with Italian origin, claiming descent from a race of distinguished 'Anglo-Norman settlers', who 'passed from Italy into the north of France, and from France, through England and Wales, into Ireland, where, from their isolated position and other causes, they retained for a long period their hereditary traits with far less modification from intermarriage and association with other races than did their English compeers'. The evidence, however, is not conclusive, and legend only merges into history with our records of the poet's grandfather, 'who was born in Ireland, but his parents left there when he was only six weeks old, and he was so patriotic that he never would acknowledge that he was other than an American. He lived in Baltimore from the time of the Revolution,' and married a lady of Pennsylvania. Becoming a quartermaster during the War of Independence, and after the peace usually styled General Poe, it would

appear that this gentleman sacrificed much for his adopted country, and was always a prominent citizen. His eldest son David, the poet's father, was trained for the bar ; but becoming at an early age infatuated with the stage, he ran away from home, married an actress, and was duly forbidden the parental presence. His wife, Elizabeth, was the daughter of an English actress who had emigrated about 1796, and at the time of their marriage a widow, though probably under twenty-five. David Poe, now disinherited, naturally adopted his wife's profession, and they settled down at the Federal Street Theatre, Boston.

It would appear that Mrs. Poe herself was a talented and favourite actress, though not pre-eminently successful, and that her husband seldom aspired above small parts. The poet once declared that 'no earl was ever prouder of his earldom than he of his descent from a woman who, although well-born, hesitated not to consecrate to the drama her brief career of genius and beauty'.

Whatever happiness his parents enjoyed, however, was brief and clouded by poverty. Married in 1805, Mrs. Poe died only six years later of consumption, her husband having already fallen a victim to the same disease, in all probability earlier in the same year.

Edgar Allan Poe, the second son, was born on January 19, 1809, at Boston, a city for which his mother, whatever her natural anxieties, seems to have cherished a deep affection. She is described as 'an accomplished artist', and her view of 'Boston Harbour: Morning, 1808,' was inscribed 'for my little son Edgar, who should ever love Boston, the place of his birth,

and where his mother found her best and most sympathetic friends'.

Thus death overshadowed the poet's very babyhood ; but, in material circumstances, unquestionably proved a blessing in disguise to the orphaned family. William Henry Leonard, the eldest brother, was apparently adopted by his grandfather (who, indeed, had forgiven the young players at the boy's birth), but entered the navy, through a disappointment in love, and died young. He wrote poetry, not now discoverable, but said to have shown *as much genius as Edgar's*, and has been also reputed the real victim of those 'penalties incurred in a drunken debauch' at St. Petersburg, from which many 'dangerous and desperate adventures' were long accredited to his more famous brother. Whether or not either of the Poes actually figured in this episode, it has been absurdly exaggerated and magnified. His sister, Rosalie M. Poe, on the other hand, is said to have been exceptionally dull, if not eccentric. She was adopted by a Scotch merchant at Richmond, Virginia, named Mackenzie ; but after that family had fallen on evil days, entered the Epiphany Church Home in Washington, where she died in 1874, aged sixty-four. Apparently she was fond of Edgar and proud of his reputation, though, on her own showing, it was not 'until she was a good-sized girl that she knew she had a brother or brothers'.

Meanwhile Edgar himself, in this respect at least the most fortunate of the family, was received into the household of Mr. John Allan, also of Richmond, and a wealthy tobacconist in good position. He was a native of Ayrshire, Scotland ; and, though not a

sympathetic man, was apparently very proud of his beautiful godson, spoiling him with most injurious effect. In Mrs. Allan, on the other hand, Poe evidently found the first of those devoted and cultured women who seem to have mothered him throughout life.

Descended from an Irish father and an English mother, adopted by a Scotchman, educated, as we shall see later, at English schools and at an American University, Poe may well have missed any distinctive traits peculiar to the national type of his country, which are in fact almost entirely absent from his best work.

Known in childhood as ‘young Allan’, Edgar accompanied his godparents abroad at an early age, and is believed to have visited many parts of Great Britain. We find him in 1816, aged seven, at the Manor House School, Stoke Newington, under a Rev. Dr. Bransby, clearly the ‘dominie’ of his *William Wilson*: ‘a thorough scholar, very apt at quotation, especially from Shakespeare and Horace, also a strict disciplinarian’. The master apparently liked the poor lad, and regretted his parents’ spoiling.

Poe’s own impressions of this time are vivid, and most characteristically expressed:—

My earliest recollections of school-life are connected with a large, rambling, Elizabethan house, in a misty-looking village of England, where were a vast number of gigantic and gnarled trees, and where all the houses were excessively ancient. In truth it was a dream-like and spirit-soothing place, that venerable old town. At this moment, in fancy, I feel the refreshing chilliness of its deeply-shadowed avenues, inhale the fragrance of its thousand shrubberies, and thrill anew with undefinable delight at the deep hollow note of the church bell, breaking each hour, with sullen and

sudden roar, upon the stillness of the dusky atmosphere, in which the fretted Gothic steeple lay embedded and asleep. It gives me, perhaps, as much of pleasure as I can now in any manner experience, to dwell upon minute recollections of the school and its concerns. Steeped in misery as I am—misery, alas! only too real—I shall be pardoned for seeking relief, however slight and temporary, in the weakness of a few rambling details. These, moreover, utterly trivial, and even ridiculous in themselves, assume to my fancy adventitious importance, as connected with a period and a locality when and where I recognize the first ambiguous monitions of the destiny which afterwards so fully overshadowed me. Let me then remember. The house, I have said, was old and irregular. The grounds were extensive, and a high and solid brick wall topped with a bed of mortar and broken glass encompassed the whole. This prison-like rampart formed the limit of our domain, beyond it we saw but thrice a week—once every Saturday afternoon, when, attended by two ushers, we were permitted to take brief walks in a body, through some of the neighbouring fields—and twice during Sunday, when we were paraded in the same formal manner to the morning and evening service in the one church of the village. Of this church the principal of our school was pastor. With how deep a spirit of wonder and perplexity was I wont to regard him from our remote pew in the gallery, as, with step solemn and slow, he ascended the pulpit! This reverend man, with countenance so benign, with robes so glossy and so clerically flowing, with wig so minutely powdered, so rigid and so vast—could this be he who of late, with sour visage, and in snuffy habiliments, administered, ferule in hand, the Draconian Laws of the academy? Oh gigantic paradox, too utterly monstrous for solution! At the angle of the ponderous wall frowned a more ponderous gate. It was riveted and studded with iron bolts, and surmounted with jagged iron spikes. What impressions of deep awe did it inspire! It was never opened save for the three periodical egressions and ingressions already mentioned; then, in every

creak of its mighty hinges, we found plenitude of mystery—a world of matter for solemn remark, or for more solemn meditation. The extensive enclosure was irregular in form, having many capacious recesses. Of these, three or four of the largest constituted the playground. It was level, and covered with fine hard gravel. I well remember it had no trees, nor benches, nor anything similar within it. Of course it was in the rear of the house. In front lay a small parterre, planted with box and other shrubs; but through this second division we passed only upon rare occasions indeed—such as the first advent to school, or final departure thence, or, perhaps, when a parent or friend having called for us, we joyfully took our way home for the Christmas or Midsummer holidays. But the house!—how quaint an old building was this! to me how veritably a place of enchantment! There was really no end to its windings—to its incomprehensible subdivisions. It was difficult at any given time to say with certainty upon which of its two stories one happened to be. From each room to every other there were sure to be found three or four steps either in ascent or descent. Then the lateral branches were innumerable—inconceivable—and so returning in upon themselves, that our most exact ideas in regard to the whole mansion were not very far different from those with which we pondered upon infinity. During the five years of my residence here I was never able to ascertain with precision in what remote locality lay the little sleeping apartment assigned to myself and some eighteen or twenty other scholars. The school room was the largest in the house—I could not help thinking, in the world. It was very long, narrow, and dismally low, with pointed Gothic windows and a ceiling of oak. In a remote and terror-inspiring angle was a square enclosure of eight or ten feet comprising the *sanctum*, ‘during hours’, of our principal, the Reverend Dr. Bransby. It was a solid structure, with massy door, sooner than open which in the absence of the ‘Dominie’, we would all have willingly perished by the *peine forte et dure*. In other angles were two similar boxes, far less reverenced, indeed, but still

greatly matters of awe. One of these was the pulpit of the ‘classical’ usher, one of the ‘English and mathematical’. Interspersed about the room, crossing and re-crossing in endless irregularity, were innumerable benches and desks, black, ancient, and time-worn, piled desperately with much-bethumbed books, and so besmeared with initial letters, names at full length, grotesque figures, and other multiplied efforts of the knife, as to have entirely lost what little of original form might have been their portion in days long departed. A huge bucket of water stood at one extremity of the room, and a clock of stupendous dimensions at the other.

Encompassed by the massy walls of this venerable academy, I passed, yet not in tedium or disgust, the years of the third lustrum of my life. The teeming brain of childhood requires no external world of incident to occupy or amuse it; and the apparently dismal monotony of a school was replete with more intense excitement than my riper years have derived from luxury, or my full manhood from crime. Yet I must believe that my first mental development had much in it of the uncommon—much even of the *outré*. Upon mankind at large the events of very early existence rarely leave in mature age any definite impression. All is grey shadow—a weak and irregular remembrance—an indistinct regathering of feeble pleasures and phantasmagoric pains. With me this is not so. In childhood I must have felt with the energy of a man what I now find stamped upon memory in lines as vivid, as deep, and as durable as the *exergues* of the Carthaginian medals. Yet in fact—in the fact of the world’s view—how little there was to remember. The morning’s awakening, the nightly summons to bed; the connings, the recitations; the periodical half-holidays and perambulations; the playground, with its broils, its pastimes, its intrigues; these, by a mental sorcery long forgotten, were made to involve a wilderness of sensation, a world of rich incident, an universe of varied emotion, of excitement the most passionate and spirit-stirring. *Oh, le bon temps, que ce siècle de fer!*

Such, no doubt coloured by the after-impressions of manhood, were Poe's early memories of a strangely isolated childhood. The average school-boy, one would imagine, had small share in his 'ponderings upon infinity', and he must have brought with him much that he fancied derived from association; but no doubt such constant and intimate familiarity with old-world life and architecture had much influence on this sensitive son of the New.

If we may believe his biographers, however, an event certainly tinged with romance and not altogether easy of credence, was more directly responsible for the haunting melancholy so persistently colouring his prose and verse. The imagination of Poe seems to have dwelt, by choice, on graves and among the unforgotten dead.

From *Edgar Poe and his Critics*, a sympathetic monograph by one of his best friends, we learn that soon after his return to America, in 1821 :

While at the academy in Richmond [Virginia] he one day accompanied a schoolmaster to his home, where he saw for the first time Mrs. H—— S——, the mother of his young friend. This lady, on entering the room, took his hand and spoke some gentle and gracious words of welcome, which so penetrated the sensitive heart of the orphan boy as to deprive him of the power of speech, and for a time almost of consciousness itself. He returned home in a dream, with but one thought, one hope in life—to hear again the sweet and gracious words that had made the desolate world so beautiful to him, and filled his lonely heart with the oppression of a new joy. This lady afterwards became the confidant of all his boyish sorrows, and hers was the one redeeming influence that saved and guided him in the earlier days of his turbulent and passionate youth. After the visitation of strange and peculiar sorrows she died, and for months after

her decease it was his habit to visit nightly the cemetery where the object of his boyish idolatry lay entombed. The thought of her—sleeping there in her loneliness—filled his heart with a profound incomunicable sorrow. When the nights were very dreary and cold, when the autumnal rain fell and the winds wailed mournfully over the graves, he lingered longest and came away most regretfully.

The same authority informs us that Poe declared the beautiful lines—‘Helen, thy beauty is to me’—were addressed to this lady, Mrs. Helen (or Jane) Stannard; and no doubt the experience inspired the various versions of *Lenore*, if not *Irene*.¹

How far Poe mingled in normal English school life we have now scant material for ascertaining; but the testimony of his American school-fellows is fairly copious and entirely consistent. The boy entered Richmond at thirteen, and was backward neither in learning nor sport. His scholarship is described as more brilliant than profound, and he evidently excelled more from choice than by application. ‘He was a swift runner, a wonderful leaper, and what was more rare, a boxer with some slight training.’ The records of his feats in swimming are familiar, and in this he must have shown exceptional daring and enterprise.

But it is admitted by those who knew, that aristocratic sentiments were then in vogue at Richmond; and the fact of Poe’s being the child of actors, himself dependent on charity, prevented the boys accepting him as a leader when officially head of the school, and no doubt encouraged a certain bitter pugnacity towards the conventional which made him rather unpopular

¹ An early version of ‘The Sleeper’.

and characterized him throughout life. He says himself, on the other hand, that his ‘tenderness of heart was so conspicuous as to make him the jest of his companions’; and enlarges upon his great affection for animals, with their ‘unselfish and self-sacrificing love, which goes directly to the heart of him who has had frequent occasion to test the paltry friendship and gossamer fidelity of mere *man*’.

Leaving school in 1825, Poe seems to have spent a few months writing verses and falling in love. So far as the young people themselves were concerned, indeed, Edgar and Elmira were a betrothed couple; but parental permission had been dispensed with, and, after the poet left home for the University, Miss Royster became Mrs. Shelton, at the still early age of seventeen. The episode coloured his early verse and, as we shall see, the friendship was renewed in later life.

At the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Poe’s character and habits—as deduced from observation—have also been sketched for us by his contemporaries. He studied classics and modern languages, attaining distinction in both; excelled at athletic exercises, while he ‘appeared to participate in what was amusement to others, more as a task than a sport’; and was at all times singularly reserved. Of many a solitary ramble among ‘the wild and dreary hills that lie westward and southward of Charlottesville, and are there dignified by the title of the Ragged Mountains’, he has himself left a characteristic record:—

The scenery which presented itself on all sides, although scarcely entitled to be called grand, had

about it an indescribable and, to me, a delicious aspect of dreary desolation. The solitude seemed absolutely virgin. I could not help believing that the green sods and the grey rocks upon which I trod had been trodden never before by the foot of a human being. So entirely secluded, and in fact inaccessible, except through a series of accidents, is the entrance of the ravine, that it is by no means impossible that I was the first adventurer—the very first and sole adventurer who had ever penetrated its recesses.

It must be admitted, however, that while the generally accepted legends concerning Poe's wildness at this period were apparently much exaggerated, if not altogether imaginary ; he was addicted to gambling and, though in residence under a year, contracted *debts of honour* estimated at two thousand dollars. These, indeed, caused a temporary estrangement from Mr. Allan, and his migration to Boston in 1827.

To this visit to his native city we have, amid the slightest records of external happenings, one permanent witness : the rare tiny volume entitled *Tamerlane and other Poems*, by a Bostonian, which was certainly its author's first literary venture. Poe was now eighteen, and he says that most of these verses were written before the completion of his fourteenth year. In tone and what may be called atmosphere these undoubtedly juvenile effusions reveal characteristics which never left him ; but the greater, distinguishing qualities of his genius are absent, while *Tamerlane* and other poems afterwards revised, were also greatly improved. By what means the youthful poet was able to find a publisher courageous enough to risk even this small venture, and why the volume, ‘although printed for publication, was suppressed through cir-

cumstances of a private nature'; we cannot determine. Very few copies are now extant, and, in consequence, are much treasured by collectors.

His latest biographers discredit altogether Poe's own story of a European trip undertaken at this time 'to offer his services to the Greeks against their Turkish tyrants', with the Griswold-embroidery of a drunken debauch at St. Petersburg; and find the tale of years in official records of one Edgar A. Perry, who entered 'Battery H of the First Artillery, then on duty in the harbour of Fort Independence', on May 26, 1827; was 'transferred with the Battery to Fort Moultrie, Charleston, S. C.', the same autumn, and a year afterwards to Fortress Munroe, Va.; promoted sergeant-major in January, 1829, and discharged on April 15.

There can be no doubt, in any case, that, most unfortunately for Poe, Mrs. Allan died in the February of 1829; and a partial reconciliation was effected with the widower, who now busied himself in securing the lad's appointment as a cadet at the West Point Military Academy. It would seem that Mr. Allan was of opinion that, by so doing, he would dispose of his young charge for life. He certainly no longer expected him to share his home or become his heir, as his letter to the Secretary of War makes very evident. 'Frankly, sir', writes the old man, 'do I declare that he is no relation to me whatever; that I have many in whom I have taken an active interest to promote theirs; with no other feeling than that every man is my care, if he be in distress. For myself I ask nothing, but I do request your kindness to aid this youth in the promotion of his future prospects.' While

these negotiations were afloat, moreover, Mr. Allan was courting the young and beautiful Miss Paterson. Poe, though past the eligible age, entered West Point on July 1, 1830 ; his guardian married again on October 5 of the same year.

It would appear probable that Poe's own ambition for a military career had been mainly dictated by a desire for compromise. At least his literary ambitions were no longer dormant, and he had already entered upon that curious habit of appealing to editors or critics of note for advice and assistance which never left him, and which affords so marked a contrast to his own unsparing critical dogmatism.

While waiting at Baltimore for his appointment, Poe entered into correspondence with John Neal, Editor of *The Yankee*, and others, who gave him a certain encouragement ; and he published *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane and Minor Poems*, in his own name. This shows a distinct advance on his initial volume, and most of its contents were included, after revision, in his own final collection of 1845 ; but his true genius had not yet found voice, and the venture attracted little notice. To Neal Poe had written : 'I am a poet—if deep worship of all beauty can make me one—and wish to be so in the common meaning of the word'. One can only be thankful that he never faltered in his ambition.

It was hardly to be expected that he would prove a model cadet. He showed exceptional ability in class and was always a devourer of books, but, on the testimony of his own friends, was utterly inefficient in military duties—presumably a matter of some

importance at West Point. He acquired a reputation for squibs and satires on the officers, and was not averse to practical joking, but here again the epithet ‘dissipated’ has been applied without reason ; and it is evident that the charges brought forward at the court martial, resulting in his dismissal in March, 1831, had been *deliberately* incurred because Mr. Allan refused to countenance resignation, and no other method remained of quitting the service.

It would seem that he had already occupied himself in writing new poems and revising old, since his next volume—*Poems by Edgar A. Poe*—was published in the same year, dedicated to the United States Corps of Cadets, and bought by nearly every one of his fellow students. These young gentlemen, however, were much annoyed that it contained none of the local squibs with which they were familiar. They revenged themselves by making merry at his expense, openly regarding ‘the author cracked and the verses ridiculous doggerel’.

✓ Poe, however, was not to be permanently discouraged by ridicule, and after he had finally abandoned the army at the age of twenty-two, no other pursuit than that of literature at any time claimed his attention. It is possible that he was still receiving a small annuity from Mr. Allan, but undoubtedly his circumstances were very straightened: we do not hear of his publishing anything, and there is even considerable doubt as to where he was living. Certainly, however, it was not long before Mrs. Clemm, a widowed sister of his father, then resident in Baltimore, opened her heart to the unhappy youth, and became, as he himself

has called her with the sincerest gratitude, his true mother. Mrs. Clemm had not the intellectual power to make herself particularly helpful in literary struggles, but in affection and in practical care she can only be called heroic. Poe was now sure, until death, of a home—and a home for the conduct of which he personally need take no thought, since it was always managed with the greatest devotion to his comfort and happiness, by one to whom no service proved too trivial or too arduous—on the precarious resources at her disposal.

It must not be supposed that Poe had any desire, now or later, to accept *charity* from Mrs. Clemm. She, indeed, was not in a position to give—more than the labour of heart and hand. But it was not until the autumn of 1833 that we know of any success attending his efforts towards earning a living, and it is curious to reflect that he owed this to a competition not altogether foreign to those with which the pushful Press of to-day has made us so deplorably familiar.

During October, 1833, *The Saturday Visitor*, recently started in Baltimore, invited its readers to bid for two prizes—one hundred dollars for the best story and fifty dollars for the best poem. Poe went in for both, and in both cases was adjudged—by an impartial committee—the best candidate. He actually sent up a manuscript volume of six tales and the verses now known as *The Coliseum*, described as an extract from an unpublished drama—never, so far as we know, completed. Having awarded him the larger prize, it is said the proprietors determined on handing

the smaller to another competitor. Following the award the editor inserted a notice which must have been peculiarly gratifying to the young author :—

Amongst the prose articles were many of various and distinguished merit, but the singular force and beauty of those sent by the author of *The Tales of the Folio Club* leave us no room for hesitation in that department. We have accordingly awarded the premium to a tale entitled *The MS. Found in a Bottle*. It would hardly be doing justice to the writer of this collection to say that the tale we have chosen is the best of the six offered by him. We cannot refrain from saying that the author owes it to his own reputation, as well as to the gratification of the community, to publish the entire volume (*Tales of the Folio Club*). These tales are eminently distinguished by a wild, vigorous, and poetical imagination, a rich style, a fertile invention, and varied and curious learning.

(Signed) JOHN P. KENNEDY.
J. H. B. LATROBE.
JAMES H. MILLER.

Mr. L. A. Wilmur, the editor of *The Saturday Visitor*, immediately sought Poe's friendship, but did not invite him to become a regular contributor, and soon afterwards left the city. But Mr. John P. Kennedy, author of *Horse-Shoe Robinson* and other popular works, was either more impressed by his genius or of a more actively benevolent disposition; and when Mr. Allan died, in March, 1834, without naming Poe in his will, it was to this new friend that the twice-orphaned youth turned, with confidence evidently well-merited, for practical assistance. He had sent the *Tales of the Folio Club* to Messrs. Carey and Lee of Philadelphia, and begged Kennedy to draw their atten-

tion to the author's 'immediate want'. The requisite influence being promptly exerted, one of the tales was accepted for an annual, edited by Miss Leslie, and Poe received fifteen dollars.

An invitation to dinner from the faithful Kennedy in March, 1835, however, brought matters to a crisis. Poe had to decline, 'for reasons of the most humiliating nature—his personal appearance'. The confession only stimulated his benefactor. Mr. Kennedy gave him immediate assistance and free access to his own home, besides busying himself in the search for employment. He set him 'drudging upon whatever may make money', and introduced him, with the most cordial enthusiasm, to a T. W. White, who in 1834 had started the *Southern Literary Messenger* in Richmond. Poe at first contributed reviews, tales, and advice—Kennedy having 'told him to write something for every number'—but was soon invited into the office; ultimately (in December, 1835) to the editorial chair—at a salary of five hundred and twenty dollars.

Thus fortune brought Poe once more to the home of his childhood, but, before leaving Baltimore, he had established more intimate and permanent relations with his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, through her daughter Virginia. This lovely child, then only thirteen, was very naturally attracted by her handsome, eloquent young cousin; and he, though just double her age, returned her admiring affection with a passion scarcely more mature. A mutual relative, Neilson Poe, most reasonably advised time for reflection, and actually offered Virginia a home till she was eighteen; but her mother, apparently, saw no reason for delay, and

herself states that her young charges were married, by license, on September 22, 1835. Doubts have been thrown upon this fact, indeed, but it does not materially affect the case, since Mrs. Clemm and her daughter undoubtedly followed Poe to his work in Baltimore, and a public marriage was solemnized by a Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Amasa Converse, at their new home on May 16, 1836. Poe's surety, Thomas Cleveland, took oath that 'Virginia E. Clemm was of the full age of twenty-one years'; and, apparently, all present connived at what must have been a palpable untruth.

Poe has himself revealed the growth of love between himself and his young bride in language which, however fanciful, cannot be charged with insincerity or exaggeration, and of which his feeling and conduct throughout her short life were never unworthy.

Eleonora, if an allegory, is no less autobiographical—

She whom I loved in youth, and of whom I now pen calmly and distinctly these remembrances, was the sole daughter of the only sister of my mother long departed. Eleonora was the name of my cousin. We had always dwelled together, beneath a tropical sun, in the Valley of the many-coloured grass. No unguided footstep ever came upon that vale; for it lay far away up among a range of giant hills that hung beetling around it, shutting out the sunlight from its sweetest recesses. No path was trodden in its vicinity; and to reach our happy home there was need of putting back, with force, the foliage of many thousands of forest trees, and of crushing to death the glories of many millions of fragrant flowers. Thus it was that, we lived all alone, knowing nothing of the world without the valley.—I, and my cousin, and her mother.

Hand in hand about this valley, for fifteen years,

roamed I with Eleonora before love entered within our hearts. It was one evening at the close of the third lustrum of her life, and of the fourth of my own, that we sat, locked in each other's embrace, beneath the serpent-like trees, and looked down within the waters of the River of Silence at our images therein. We spoke no words during the rest of that sweet day ; and our words even upon the morrow were tremulous and few. We had drawn the god Eros from that wave, and now we felt that he had enkindled within us the fiery souls of our forefathers. The passions which had for centuries distinguished our race came thronging with the fancies for which they had been equally noted, and together breathed a delirious bliss over the Valley of the many-coloured grass. A change fell upon all things. Strange, brilliant flowers, star-shaped, burst out upon the trees where no flowers had been known before. The tints of the green carpet deepened ; and when, one by one, the white daisies shrank away, there sprang up in place of them ten by ten of the ruby-coloured asphodel. And life arose in our paths ; for the tall flamingo, hitherto unseen, with all gay glowing birds, flaunted his scarlet plumage before us. The golden and silver fish haunted the river, out of the bosom of which issued, little by little, a murmur that swelled, at length, into a lulling melody more divine than that of the harp of Aeolus, sweeter than all save the voice of Eleonora. And now, too, a luminous cloud, which we had long watched in the regions of Hesper, floated out thence, all gorgeous in crimson and gold, and settling in peace above us, sank, day by day, lower and lower, until its edges rested upon the tops of the mountains, turning all their dimness into magnificence, and shutting us up, as if for ever, within a magic prison-house of grandeur and of glory.

The rhapsodies of passion, however transcendent, do not themselves ensure domestic happiness ; and Virginia—Eleonora herself—was ‘ a maiden artless and innocent as the brief life she had led among the flowers’. But the romantic tenderness of Mrs. Clemm

never obscured her hold on practical affairs ; and Poe had already won for himself a position which bade fair to satisfy the modest requirements of their little household. ‘We three lived only for each other,’ declared Mrs. Clemm : and the poet always averred, ‘I see no one so beautiful as my sweet little wife’.

Yet, from the beginning, long before detecting the ‘finger of Death’ in Virginia’s beauty, Poe was ‘struggling in vain against the influence of melancholy’. Now and always he was subject to what his loyal friend Kennedy called fits of the ‘blue devils’ ; and the cause, unfortunately, was not difficult to detect. Shortly before his marriage Mr. White had written :—

If you could make yourself contented to take up your quarters in my family or in any other private family where liquor is not used, I should think there were hopes for you. But if you go to a tavern, or to any other place where it is used at table, *you are not safe*. I speak from experience.

When and where Poe first contracted the *habit* of intoxication it is now impossible to determine. Facts, undoubtedly, have been perverted beyond recognition by malice and envy. Poe was not *dissipated* as a young man ; and never, until after his wife’s death, allowed the taste for drink to weaken his mind or *govern* his life. One William Gowan, ‘the most truthful and uncompromising of men’, bears witness to having lived with the family on the most intimate terms for over eight months, while Mrs. Clemm was keeping a boarding house in New York. ‘During that time I never saw him the least affected with liquor, nor even descend to any known vice, while he was one

of the most courteous, gentlemanly, and intelligent companions I have met with during my journeyings and haltings through divers divisions of the globe.' Similar testimony, equally above reproach, might be produced for periods covering the greater part of Poe's life; and it gives us a truthful picture of the *normal man*.

But his disposition was excitable; though somewhat proud and reserved in manner he would unbend in convivial company; 'and,' says N. P. Willis, 'with a single glass of wine his whole nature was reversed, the demon became uppermost, and, though none of the usual signs of intoxication were visible, his *will* was palpably insane.' Though passionately sincere in his resolutions to amend, and capable of prolonged self-control, it seems that Poe (very probably just because the memory of backslidings made him depressed) did allow the habit to grow on him with increasing age. His liability to such attacks made it almost impossible for him to keep any *regular* editorial post, and was the cause of endless misunderstanding and dispute with his best friends. The facts, unfortunately, became public property, because, when under the influence of alcohol, Poe gave utterance—with more than his natural force of language—to sentiments so arrogant, vain-glorious, and intolerant as to raise the worst passions in those who were soon to envy his popularity, or had already suffered under his scathing criticism. Nearly every writer of no more than mediocre ability in the States was eager to hear, to repeat, and to exaggerate the last foolish deed or saying of the *Messenger's* brilliant editor. We have all heard far more than the

truth on this matter. It should be accepted as an evil force in the man, breaking out with varied intensity at irregular intervals; the main cause of his habitual melancholy, of the rupture with his best friends, and of the constant malice of his enemies.

Meantime we have left Poe on the threshold of his brilliant, if erratic, journalistic career. Curiously enough, he was in many ways a most successful editor. The papers entrusted at various times to his care increased their circulation by leaps and bounds: acquiring, through his amazing fertility of resource, a renown perhaps not altogether enviable, and lacking, alas, in stability. Under Mr. White, and apparently at his suggestion, Poe early inaugurated that series of vigorous onslaughts on book-making mediocrity which made him at once well known and well hated throughout the country. One must regret, indeed, that so much time and energy was expended on those only deserving of neglect; but, maybe, without such a stimulus to notoriety the marvellous stories—appearing simultaneously in the same organ—would not so quickly have attracted notice.

Though apparently Poe earned more than his editorial salary at the *Messenger*, he does not appear to have been really satisfied with his position, and the permanent connexion with Mr. White was severed, perhaps by mutual consent, in January, 1837—Poe remaining an occasional contributor. Kennedy says the young editor was ‘irregular, eccentric, and querulous’; nor would he himself have denied the charge.

The family then moved to New York, where Mrs. Clemm attempted—with only moderate success

—to keep up the home by taking boarders, and after publishing through Messrs. Harper the ingenious *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* in 1838, Poe decided on yet another emigration—this time to Philadelphia, where they actually settled down for nearly six years.

Now and always Poe wrote much, on many subjects, for booksellers, magazines, and annuals, which it is impossible here to enumerate in detail. He published twenty-five *Tales of the Arabesque and Grotesque* in two volumes, with Lea and Blanchard, late in 1840. His first important engagement at Philadelphia, however, was with William E. Burton, comedian, and his *Gentleman's Magazine*, of which Poe was an associate editor from July, 1839, to June, 1840, when this engagement, too, was abruptly terminated. The men were evidently uncongenial; and Poe's declaration (September 21, 1839) that, 'as soon as fate allows, he will have a magazine of his own, and will endeavour to kick up a dust', does not spell loyalty. Four months after his resignation, however, Burton himself sold out to George R. Graham, who founded *Graham's Magazine* and made Poe his editor, in February, 1841. Here appeared the famous *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, but Poe was disgusted with the 'namby-pamby character of the magazine', and resigned in April, 1842. The truth seems to have been that he had really hoped to interest Graham in founding that magazine which it was the dominant motive of his life to establish himself, and of which more than one official announcement appeared at different times in the Press, never destined, unfortunately, to bear fruit. Meanwhile his connexion with *Graham's Magazine* was not entirely

severed, and, after the resignation of his immediate successor, Rufus W. Griswold, in 1843, became apparently quite intimate once more. He had, meanwhile, vainly endeavoured to obtain an appointment in the Custom House at Philadelphia.

He was now a welcome contributor in many quarters, and his lectures on *The Poetry of America* attracted general attention. He made friends with Dickens, and, by correspondence, with Mrs. Browning. He deliberately sought, and secured, public notice in every part of the country, by personally sending his best work to eminent men ; and was not above less dignified methods of exciting curiosity or of making himself known. On the whole he met with a generous and sympathetic response. He was accepted, alike by great and small, as a writer of distinction and genius.

At home in Philadelphia Poe impressed every one by his ‘uniform gentleness of disposition and kindness of heart’, appearing ‘refined and gentlemanly, exceedingly neat in his person’. Mrs. Clemm remained ‘the ever-vigilant guardian . . . the sole servant, keeping everything clean ; the sole messenger, doing the errands, making pilgrimages between the poet and his publisher’. Virginia still ‘hardly looked more than fourteen—fair, soft, and graceful and girlish. Every one who saw her was won by her. Poe was very proud and very fond of her, and used to delight in the round, childlike face and plump little figure, which he contrasted with himself, so thin and melancholy-looking ; and she in turn idolized him’.

The picture seems almost idyllic, but beneath this smiling surface lurked a grim shadow to which Poe

himself attributed, not without reason, those ugly passages which were ever blotting his career.

In January, 1848, he wrote a letter to W. Eveleth, published soon after his death :—

I can do more than hint. This ‘evil’ was the greatest which can befall a man. Six years ago, a wife, whom I loved as no man ever loved before, ruptured a blood-vessel in singing. Her life was despaired of. I took leave of her for ever and underwent all the agonies of her death. She recovered partially, and I again hoped. At the end of the year the vessel broke again. I went through precisely the same scene. Then again—again—and even once again, at varying intervals. Each time I felt all the agonies of her death—and at each accession of the disorder I loved her more dearly and clung to her life with more desperate pertinacity. But I am constitutionally sensitive —nervous in a very unusual degree. I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity. During these fits of absolute unconsciousness I drank¹—God only ✓ knows how often or how much. As a matter of course my enemies referred the insanity to the drink rather than the drink to the insanity.

In the spring of 1844 Poe moved to New York ; where his life, public and private, offers a very similar picture ; yet with an ever increasing reputation, an ever darkening shadow of weakness.

Claiming that he had raised the circulation of the *Messenger* in fifteen months from seven hundred to well over five thousand, and of *Graham's* in eighteen months from five to fifty thousand, he once more endeavoured to interest men of capital and influence in his projected ‘magazine of bold and noble aims.’ He assisted N. P. Willis in the office of the *Evening Mirror* ; lectured again on Poetry, with applause ; and

¹ He also took opium. ✓

on January 29, 1845, published in the *Mirror* ‘The Raven’—which ‘made him the literary hero of the hour’. Hitherto, it would seem, Poe had been known chiefly, if not exclusively, by his tales and criticisms; but the collected *Poems*—issued the same year—by Wiley and Putnam, were received with sympathetic admiration on all hands.

In March 1845 he became co-editor, with one Charles F. Briggs, of the *Broadway Journal*, afterwards bought the paper and carried it on himself, at the peril of his resources—mental and financial, till January 1846. During the greater part of that year he was almost exclusively engaged upon that unfortunate series of critical articles on his contemporaries—‘The Literati,’ which were both censorious and puerile.

Poe said himself at this time: ‘I put so many irons in the fire all at once that I have been quite unable to get them out’; but it is to be feared that the continuous poverty dogging his footsteps, amidst success, was due to other causes.

Unquestionably, his health broke down completely early in 1846; and—in the winter, a friend found Virginia dying:—

There was no clothing on the bed, which was only straw, but a snow-white counterpane and sheets. The weather was cold, and the sick lady had the dreadful chills that accompany the hectic fever of consumption. She lay on the straw bed, wrapped in her husband’s great coat, with a large tortoiseshell cat on her bosom. The wonderful cat seemed conscious of her great usefulness. The coat and the cat were the sufferer’s only means of warmth, except as her husband held her hands, and her mother her feet.’

Such absolute destitution once known was immedi-

ately relieved—in part by public subscription; and the last days of Virginia were passed in reasonable comfort which the practical generosity of Mrs. (Marie Louise) Shew bestowed without stint on the hapless family. On January 30, 1847, she died, being then in her twenty-sixth year.

As the poet sang:—

A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee,
So that her *high-born kinsmen* came,
And bore her away from me.

Of Poe's life after this, its great tragedy, it must be not only kinder, but more just, to say little. 'Men have called me mad,' he wrote once, 'but the question is not yet settled whether madness is or is not the loftiest intelligence, whether much that is glorious, whether all that is profound, does not spring from disease of thought—from *moods* of mind exalted at the expense of the general intellect.'

This, surely, were not an inapt description of the poet's best work—a *mood* exalted, at great expense. During these last years, certainly, his mental balance was so perilously near destruction as to absolve him, for any impartial observer, from judgements applicable to the ordinarily sane. ✓

It should be observed, in the first place, that his wife's illness was made the occasion of most brutal newspaper-attacks on his character, including even the basest insinuations of debauchery and neglect as the *cause* of his present trouble. The well-meant appeal of N. P. Willis, admitting his 'infirmities' while excusing them, was not perhaps well-timed and certainly

caused Poe bitter humiliation, though without severing his friendship with the writer.

For a time, however, the bereaved poet took little heed of the *public* estimate and, not unnaturally considering his still child-like temperament, became very largely dependent on those friendships with sympathetic, intellectual women which have been the occasion of so much unsavoury scandal.

Of these the first was Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood, herself a poetess, whom he met soon after settling in New York. Virginia had encouraged the intimacy, believing the lady's influence entirely for her husband's good, and having the good sense to pardon freely 'the many poetical episodes in which the impassioned romance of his temperament impelled him to indulge'. At one time the stupid intervention of busybodies led to his returning the letters of Mrs. Osgood, but they remained friends till death.

When Mrs. Shew came into Poe's life he was not, as we have seen, entirely master of himself; and though she remained on terms of closest affection both with him and with Mrs. Clemm after Virginia's death, 'his continually increasing eccentricities compelled her to define more closely the limits of their intercourse,' and so brought about a parting. To her he wrote of himself as a 'lost soul', but pledged 'to overcome his grief for the sake of her unselfish care of him in the past'.

Lecturing at Lowell, Massachusetts, on 'The Female Poets of America', Poe once selected Mrs. Helen Whitman for 'pre-eminence in refinement of art, enthusiasm, imagination and genius, properly so-called'.

Hearing more of the authoress from a mutual acquaintance, as Poe afterwards told Mrs. Whitman herself, ‘your unknown heart seemed to pass into my bosom—there to dwell for ever—while mine, I thought, was translated into your own. From that hour I loved you. Since that period I have never seen nor heard your name without a shiver, half of delight, half of anxiety.’ It is scarcely surprising that a passion so strangely heralded bore tragic fruit. Poe, indeed, conducted his love-making with tumultuous impetuosity; and finally ‘hailed her as an angel sent to save him from perdition’. Exacting a solemn promise that he would never touch stimulants again, Mrs. Whitman did consent to an engagement, believing she could reclaim him, and a day for their wedding was actually determined. At the last moment, however, she was told (whether truthfully or not) that he had broken his word, and ‘gathering together some papers which he had entrusted to my keeping I placed them in his hands without a word of explanation or reproach, and, utterly worn out and exhausted by the conflicts and anxieties and responsibilities of the last few days, I drenched my handkerchief with ether and threw myself on a sofa, hoping to lose myself in utter unconsciousness. Sinking on his knees beside me, he entreated me to speak to him—to speak *one* word, but *one* word. At last I responded, almost inaudibly, “what can I say.” “Say that you love me, Helen.” “*I love you.*” These were the last words I ever spoke to him.’

Contemporaneously with this stormy and unfortunate episode, Poe had made the acquaintance, also through a lecture, of that married lady still only known to his

biographers as ‘Annie’. To this lady, ‘his sweet friend and sister.’ Poe certainly wrote like a lover; but there is every reason to suppose that she understood his nature as few had done, while her influence was almost entirely soothing and helpful. She, and her family, received him to the last as an honoured guest, were able—in some measure—to restrain his increasing tendency to delirium; and, after his death, made a home for Mrs. Clemm.

Poe’s friendship with Annie, indeed, survived the last, unromantic romance of his shattered life when meeting again his first boyish love Sarah Elmira Royster, then a widowed Mrs. Shelton, he begged her to marry him and was—somewhat indefinitely—accepted.

Of such pathetic and irresponsible attempts to reawaken a heart now buried with the dead, Mrs. Osgood has said the last word:—‘the wise and well-informed knew how to regard, as they would the impetuous anger of a spoiled infant, balked of its capricious will, the equally harmless and unmeaning phrenzy of that stray child of Poetry and Passion.’

It must not be supposed, however, that Poe found himself entirely incapable of literary effort during these last years. Many of his poems, not inferior to the earlier work, were written at lucid intervals; he resumed his connexion with the magazines; and, as we have seen, lectured at different times in several places.

A Miss Susan Archer Talley, afterwards Mrs. Weiss, has put on record the fascination he was still able to exercise over the young and enthusiastic:—

I can vividly recall him as he appearéd on his visits to us. He always carried a cane, and upon entering the avenue would remove his hat, throw back his hair, and walk lingeringly, as if enjoying the coolness, carrying his hat in his hand, generally behind him. Sometimes he would pause to examine some rare flower, or to pluck a grape from the laden trellises. He met us always with an expression of pleasure illuminating his countenance and lighting his fine eyes. . . .

Apart from the wonderful beauty of his eyes, I would not have called Poe a very handsome man. He was in my opinion rather distinguished looking than handsome, what he had been when younger I had heard, but at the period of my acquaintance with him he had a pallid and careworn look—somewhat haggard, indeed—very apparent except in his moments of animation. He wore a dark moustache, scrupulously kept, but not entirely concealing a slightly contracted expression of the mouth, and an occasional twitching of the upper lip, resembling a sneer. This sneer, indeed, was easily excited—a motion of the lip, scarcely perceptible, and yet intensely expressive. There was in it nothing of ill-nature, but much of sarcasm.

The same lady declares that she only once saw Poe ‘really sad or depressed’; and that to the last ‘he spoke of his future, seeming to anticipate it with an eager delight, like that of a youth’.

Yet, in reality, Poe at this time was little better than a wreck—mentally and physically. The end, indeed, was very near; though even now the circumstances immediately preceding his death are wrapped in mystery. It is known that on September 30, 1849, or the following day, when staying at Richmond with Mrs. Talley, Poe set out with the intention of joining Mrs. Clemm in New York. Taking the boat to

Baltimore he apparently arrived at that city the next morning cheerful and sober; but, on starting for Philadelphia, got into a wrong car and was brought back in a semi-unconscious condition. He must either have had some serious attack or indulged himself with convivial friends; and there is no great improbability in the terrible story long current in Baltimore that the unfortunate man was captured by a band of politicians who kept him stupefied by drugs, made him vote at several booths, and then left him—alone and insensible—in the streets. Certainly he was recognized on election day, Wednesday, October 3, at a rum-shop used for voting. Here fortunately, however, he mentioned the name of a doctor well-known in the city and was carried to the ‘Washington University Hospital’.

His relatives were summoned and (Judge) Neilson Poe did everything possible for his comfort, but, except during one brief interval, he remained unconscious and died at about five o'clock in the morning of Sunday, October 7, 1849; rather more than three years after his wife, himself aged forty.

What Poe *might have done*, who shall say: since *what he did* remains literature, revealing genius? *What he was* romance made him: ‘the deep worship of all beauty,’ the love of loving, and of being loved.

R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

POE himself issued four volumes of Poetry :—

A. TAMERLANE
 AND
 OTHER POEMS
 BY A BOSTONIAN

Young heads are giddy and young hearts are warm
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.

COWPER.

BOSTON.
CALVIN F. S. THOMAS . . . PRINTER.
1827.

Preface :—The greater part of the poems which compose this little volume were written in the year 1821–2, when the author had not completed his fourteenth year. They were of course not intended for publication ; why they are now published concerns no one but himself. Of the smaller pieces very little need be said : they perhaps savour too much of egotism ; but they were written by one too young to have any knowledge of the world but from his own breast. In ‘Tamerlane’ he has endeavoured to expose the folly of even *risking* the best feelings of the heart at the shrine of Ambition. He is conscious that in this there are many faults (besides that of the general character of the poem), which he flatters

himself he could, with little trouble, have corrected, but unlike many of his predecessors, has been too fond of his early productions to amend them in his *old age*.

He will not say that he is indifferent as to the success of these Poems—it might stimulate him to other attempts—but he can safely say that failure will not influence him in a resolution already adopted. This is challenging criticism—let it be so. *Nos haec novimus esse nihil.*

CONTENTS

- ✓ Tamerlane.
- Fugitive Pieces.
 - To — —.
 - ✓ Dreams.
 - ✓ Visit of the Dead.
 - ✓ Evening Star.
 - ✓ Imitation.
 - ✓ Communion with nature.¹
 - ‘A wilder’d being from my birth.’
 - ✓ The happiest day—the happiest hour.’
 - ✓ The Lake.
- Author’s Notes [To *Tamerlane*].

This little volume (measuring $6\frac{3}{8}$ by $4\frac{1}{8}$ inches) was issued as a pamphlet in yellow covers, and occupied no more than forty pages. Only three copies are known to be extant. It was reprinted, in 1884, with corrections of obvious misprints, by Mr. R. H. Shepherd.

The closing words of the Preface (from Martial) also appeared on the title-page of *Poems by Two Brothers* (now identified as Alfred, Charles, and Frederick Tennyson) which appeared in the same year.

¹ Printed in our edition under the title ‘Stanzas’.

B.

AL AARAAF

TAMERLANE
AND
MINOR POEMS
BY EDGAR A. POE.

BALTIMORE.
HATCH AND DUNNING.
1829.

Dedication :—

Who drinks the deepest?—here's to him.—CLEVELAND.

CONTENTS

✓Sonnet, 'Science'.

✓Al Aaraaf.

Tamerlane.

[Advertisement. This poem was printed for publication in Boston, in the year 1827, but suppressed through circumstances of a private nature.

Dedication. To John Neal, this poem is respectfully dedicated].

Preface.

To — —.

To — —.

To — —.

To the River.

The Lake. To—.

Spirits of the Dead. ()

✓A Dream.

To M—.

Fairyland.

An octavo volume of 71 pages, issued in blue boards.

C.

POEMS

BY

EDGAR A. POE.

Toute le monde a Raison.—ROCHEFOUCAULT.

SECOND EDITION.

NEW YORK.

PUBLISHED BY ELAM BLIN.

1831.

Dedication: To the U. S. Corps of Cadets, this volume is respectfully dedicated.

Letter to Mr. — — [printed below].

Introduction.

To Helen.

Israfel

The Doomed City.

Fairyland.

Irene.

A Paean.

Valley Nis.

Sonnet, 'Science.'

Al Aaraaf.

Tamerlane.

A Duodecimo volume of 124 pages issued in green boards.

LETTER TO MR. ——

WEST POINT,—1831.

DEAR B.—,

Believing only a portion of my former volume to be worthy of a second edition—that small portion I thought it as well to include in the present book as to republish by itself. I have, therefore, herein combined ‘Al Aaraaf’ and ‘Tamerlane’ with other Poems hitherto unprinted. Nor have I hesitated to insert from the ‘Minor Poems’ now omitted whole lines, and even passages, to the end that, being placed in a fairer light, and the trash shaken from them in which they were imbedded, they may have some chance of being seen by posterity.

It has been said, that a good critique on a poem may be written by one who is no poet himself. This, according to *your* idea and *mine* of poetry, I feel to be false—the less poetical the critic, the less just the critique, and the converse. On this account, and because there are but few B—s in the world, I would be as much ashamed of the world’s good opinion as proud of your own. Another than yourself might here observe, ‘Shakespeare is in possession of the world’s good opinion, and yet Shakespeare is the greatest of poets. It appears then that the world judge correctly; why should you be ashamed of their favourable judgment?’ The difficulty lies in the interpretation of the word ‘judgment’ or ‘opinion’. The opinion is the world’s, truly, but it may be called theirs as a man would call a book his, having bought it: he did not write the book, but it is his; they did not originate the opinion, but it is theirs. A fool, for example, thinks Shakespeare a great poet—yet the fool has never read

Shakespeare. But the fool's neighbour, who is a step higher on the Andes of the mind, whose head (that is to say, his more exalted thought) is too far above the fool to be seen or understood, but whose feet (by which I mean his every-day actions) are sufficiently near to be discerned, and by means of which that superiority is ascertained, which *but* for them would never have been discovered—this neighbour asserts that Shakespeare is a great poet—the fool believes him, and it is henceforward his *opinion*. This neighbour's own opinion has, in like manner, been adopted from one above *him*, and so, ascendingly, to a few gifted individuals, who kneel around the summit, beholding, face to face, the master spirit who stands upon the pinnacle.

You are aware of the great barrier in the path of an American writer. He is read, if at all, in preference to the combined and established wit of the world. I say established: for it is with literature as with law or empire—an established name is an estate in tenure, or a throne in possession. Besides, one might suppose that books, like their authors, improve by travel—their having crossed the sea is, with us, so great a distinction. Our antiquaries abandon time for distance: our very fops glance from the binding to the bottom of the title-page, where the mystic characters which spell London, Paris, or Geneva, are precisely so many letters of recommendation.

I mentioned just now a vulgar error as regards criticism. I think the notion that no poet can form a correct estimate of his own writings is another. I remarked before, that in proportion to the poetical talent would be the justice of a critique upon poetry. Therefore, a bad poet would, I grant, make a false critique, and his self-love would infallibly bias his little judgment in his favour; but a poet, who is indeed a poet, could not, I think, fail of making a just critique. Whatever

should be deducted on the score of self-love, might be replaced on account of his intimate acquaintance with the subject; in short, we have more instances of false criticism than of just, where one's own writings are the test, simply because we have more bad poets than good. There are of course many objections to what I say: Milton is a great example of the contrary; but his opinion with respect to the 'Paradise Regained' is by no means fairly ascertained. By what trivial circumstances men are often led to assert what they do not really believe! Perhaps an inadvertent word has descended to posterity. But, in fact, the 'Paradise Regained' is little, if at all, inferior to the 'Paradise Lost', and is only supposed so to be, because men do not like epics, whatever they may say to the contrary, and reading those of Milton in their natural order, are too much wearied with the first to derive any pleasure from the second.

I dare say Milton preferred 'Comus' to either—if so, justly.

As I am speaking of poetry, it will not be amiss to touch slightly upon the most singular heresy in its modern history—the heresy of what is called, very foolishly, the 'Lake School'. Some years ago I might have been induced, by an occasion like the present, to attempt a formal refutation of their doctrine; at present it would be a work of supererogation. The wise must bow to the wisdom of such men as Coleridge and Southey, but being wise, have laughed at poetical theories so prosaically exemplified.

Aristotle, with singular assurance, has declared poetry the most philosophical of all writing¹—but it required a Wordsworth to pronounce it most metaphysical. He

¹ Σπουδαιώτατον καὶ φιλοσοφικώτατον γένος.

seems to think that the end of poetry is, or should be, instruction—yet it is a truism that the end of our existence is happiness; if so, the end of every separate part of our existence—everything connected with our existence—should be still happiness. Therefore the end of instruction should be happiness; and happiness is another name for pleasure;—therefore the end of instruction should be pleasure; yet we see the above-mentioned opinion implies precisely the reverse.

To proceed: *Cæteris paribus*, he who pleases is of more importance to his fellow men than he who instructs, since utility is happiness, and pleasure is the end already obtained which instruction is merely the means of obtaining.

I see no reason, then, why our metaphysical poets should plume themselves so much on the utility of their works, unless indeed they refer to instruction with eternity in view: in which case, sincere respect for their piety would not allow me to express my contempt for their judgment; contempt which it would be difficult to conceal since their writings are professedly to be understood by the few, and it is the many who stand in need of salvation. In such case I should no doubt be tempted to think of the devil in Melmoth, who labours indefatigably through three octavo volumes to accomplish the destruction of one or two souls, while any common devil would have demolished one or two thousand.

Against the subtleties which would make poetry a study—not a passion—it becomes the metaphysician to reason, but the poet to protest. Yet Wordsworth and Coleridge are men in years; the one imbued in contemplation from childhood, the other a giant in intellect and learning. The diffidence, then, with which I venture to dispute their authority would be overwhelming, did not I feel, from the bottom of my heart, that learning

has little to do with the imagination—intellect with the passions—or age with poetry.

Trifles, like straws, upon the surface flow ;
He who would search for pearls must dive below,

are lines which have done much mischief. As regards the greater truths, men oftener err by seeking them at the bottom than at the top ; the depth lies in the huge abysses where wisdom is sought—not in the palpable palaces where she is found. The ancients were not always right in hiding the goddess in a well ; witness the light which Bacon has thrown upon philosophy : witness the principles of our divine faith—that moral mechanism by which the simplicity of a child may overbalance the wisdom of a man.

Poetry, above all things, is a beautiful painting whose tints, to minute inspection, are confusion worse confounded, but start boldly out to the cursory glance of the connoisseur.

We see an instance of Coleridge's liability to err in his 'Biographia Literaria'—professedly his literary life and opinions, but, in fact, a treatise *de omni scibili et quibusdam aliis*. He goes wrong by reason of his very profundity, and of his error we have a natural type in the contemplation of a star. He who regards it directly and intensely sees, it is true, the star, but it is the star without a ray—while he who surveys it less inquisitively is conscious of all for which the star is useful to us below—its brilliance and its beauty.

As to Wordsworth, I have no faith in him. That he had, in youth, the feelings of a poet, I believe—for there are glimpses of extreme delicacy in his writings (and delicacy is the poet's own kingdom—his *el dorado*)—but they have the appearance of a better day recollected ; and glimpses, at best, are little evidence of present poetic

fire—we know that a few straggling flowers spring up daily in the crevices of the avalanche.

He was to blame in wearing away his youth in contemplation with the end of poetizing in his manhood. With the increase of his judgment, the light which should make it apparent has faded away. His judgment consequently is too correct. This may not be understood, but the old Goths of Germany would have understood it, who used to debate matters of importance to their State twice, once when drunk, and once when sober—sober that they might not be deficient in formality—drunk lest they should be destitute of vigour.

The long wordy discussions by which he tries to reason us into admiration of his poetry, speak very little in his favour. They are full of such assertions as this (I have opened one of his volumes at random): ‘Of genius the only proof is the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before.’ Indeed! then it follows that in doing what is *un*worthy to be done, or what *has* been done before, no genius can be evinced: yet the picking of pockets is an unworthy act, pockets have been picked time immemorial, and Barrington, the pickpocket, in point of genius would have thought hard of a comparison with William Wordsworth, the poet.

Again—in estimating the merit of certain poems, whether they be Ossian’s or M’Pherson’s, can surely be of little consequence, yet, in order to prove their worthlessness, Mr. W. has expended many pages in the controversy. *Tantæ animis!* Can great minds descend to such absurdity? But worse still: that he may beat down every argument in favour of these poems, he triumphantly drags forward a passage, in his abomination of which he expects the reader to sympathize. It is the beginning of the epic poem, ‘Temora’. ‘The blue waves of Ullin roll in light; the green hills are covered with day; trees

shake their dusky heads in the breeze'. And this—this gorgeous, yet simple imagery—where all is alive and panting with immortality—than which earth has nothing more grand, nor paradise more beautiful—this—William Wordsworth, the author of '*Peter Bell*', has *selected* to dignify with his supreme contempt. We shall see what better he, in his own person, has to offer. *Imprimis*:

And now she's at the pony's head,
And now she's at the pony's tail,
On that side now, and now on this,
And almost stifled her with bliss—
A few sad tears does Betty shed,
She pats the pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Fry!
O Johnny, never mind the Doctor!

Secondly:

The dew was falling fast, the—stars began to blink
I heard a voice, it said—Drink, pretty creature, drink;
And looking o'er the edge, be—fore me I espied
A snow-white mountain lamb with a—maiden at its side.
No other sheep were near, the lamb was all alone,
And by a slender cord was—tethered to a stone.

Now, we have no doubt this is all true; we *will* believe it—indeed we will, Mr. W. Is it sympathy for the sheep you wish to excite? I love a sheep from the bottom of my heart.

But there *are* occasions, dear B——, there are occasions when even Wordsworth is reasonable. Even Stamboul, it is said, shall have an end, and the most unlucky blunders must come to a conclusion. Here is an extract from his preface:—

‘Those who have been accustomed to the phraseology of modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to a conclusion’ (*impossible!*) ‘will, no doubt, have to struggle with feelings of awkwardness’ (ha! ha! ha!); ‘they will look round for poetry’ (ha! ha! ha! ha!), ‘and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy

these attempts have been permitted to assume that title.' Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

Yet let not Mr. W. despair, he has given immortality to a waggon and the bee, Sophocles has eternalized a sore toe, and dignified a tragedy with a chorus of turkeys.

Of Coleridge I cannot speak but with reverence. His towering intellect ! his gigantic power ! To use an author quoted by himself, 'J'ai trouvé souvent que la plupart des sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas en ce qu'elles nient'; and, to employ his own language, he has imprisoned his own conceptions by the barrier he has erected against those of others. It is lamentable to think that such a mind should be buried in metaphysics, and, like the Nyctanthes, waste its perfume upon the night alone. In reading that man's poetry I tremble like one who stands upon a volcano, conscious, from the very darkness bursting from the crater, of the fire and the light that are weltering below.

What is Poetry? Poetry! That Proteus-like idea, with as many appellations as the nine-titled Coreyra! Give me, I demanded of a scholar some time ago, give me a definition of Poetry. 'Très volontiers'—and he proceeded to his library, brought me a Dr. Johnson, and overwhelmed me with a definition. Shade of the immortal Shakespeare! I imagined to myself the scowl of your spiritual eye upon the profanity of that scurrilous Ursula Major. Think of poetry, dear B——, think of poetry, and then think of—Dr. Samuel Johnson! Think of all that is airy and fairy-like, and then of all that is hideous and unwieldy: think of his huge bulk, the Elephant! and then—and then think of the Tempest—the Midsummer Night's Dream — Prospero — Oberon — and Titania!

A poem, in my opinion, is opposed to a work of science by having, for its *immediate* object, pleasure, not truth:

to romance, by having for its object an *indefinite* instead of a *definite* pleasure, being a poem only so far as this object is attained : romance presenting perceptible images with definite, poetry with *indefinite* sensations, to which end music is an *essential*, since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception. Music, when combined with a pleasurable idea, is poetry : music, without the idea, is simply music : the idea, without the music, is prose from its very definiteness.

What was meant by the invective against ‘him who had no music in his soul’?

To sum up this long rigmarole, I have, dear B—, what you no doubt perceive, for the metaphysical poets, as poets, the most sovereign contempt. That they have followers proves nothing—

No Indian prince has to his palace
More followers than a thief to the gallows.

D. THE RAVEN
 AND
 OTHER POEMS.
 BY
 EDGAR A. POE.

NEW YORK.
WILEY AND PUTNAM, 161 BROADWAY.
1845.

A duodecimo volume of 91 pages, reprinted below.

For a few of Poe’s Poems the magazine issues were apparently the earliest ; but for these—and others—we

are indebted to the labours of his literary executor R. W. Griswold who, whatever his faults of taste and judgement, did 'secure what Poe in his life-time could never accomplish,—a tolerably complete collected edition of the tales, reviews, and poems'. It does not, however, include all now known, and printed below.

It bore title :—

THE WORKS
OF THE LATE
EDGAR A. POE:
WITH
NOTICES OF HIS LIFE AND GENIUS.
BY
N. P. WILLIS, J. R. LOWELL, AND R. W. GRISWOLD.
IN TWO VOLUMES.
NEW YORK.
J. S. REDFIELD, CLINTON HALL.
1850.

[In the same year appeared *The Literati* : Some honest opinions about authorial merits and demerits, with occasional words of Personality. Together with marginalia, suggestions, and essays. By Edgar A. Poe, with a sketch of the author by Rufus Wilmot Griswold.—Reprinted as Vol. iii. in a second edition of the *Works*, 1850].

Griswold's work has formed the basis of the ordinary subsequent editions, and contained the poems on which its author's reputation was permanently established.

Besides the interesting essays by J. R. Lowell and N. P. Willis, with the editor's own spiteful memoir, it contained the following from Poe's step-mother, sufficiently indicating its scope and purpose, how executed we now know :—

TO THE READER.

The late Edgar Allan Poe, who was the husband of my only daughter, the son of my eldest brother, and more than a son to myself, in his long-continued and affectionate observance of every duty to me,—under an impression that he might be called suddenly from the world, wrote (just before he left his home in Fordham, for the last time, on the 29th of June, 1849) requests that the Rev. Rufus W. Griswold should act as his literary executor, and superintend the publication of his works ; and that N. P. Willis, Esq. should write such observations upon his life and character, as he might deem suitable to address to thinking men, in vindication of his memory.

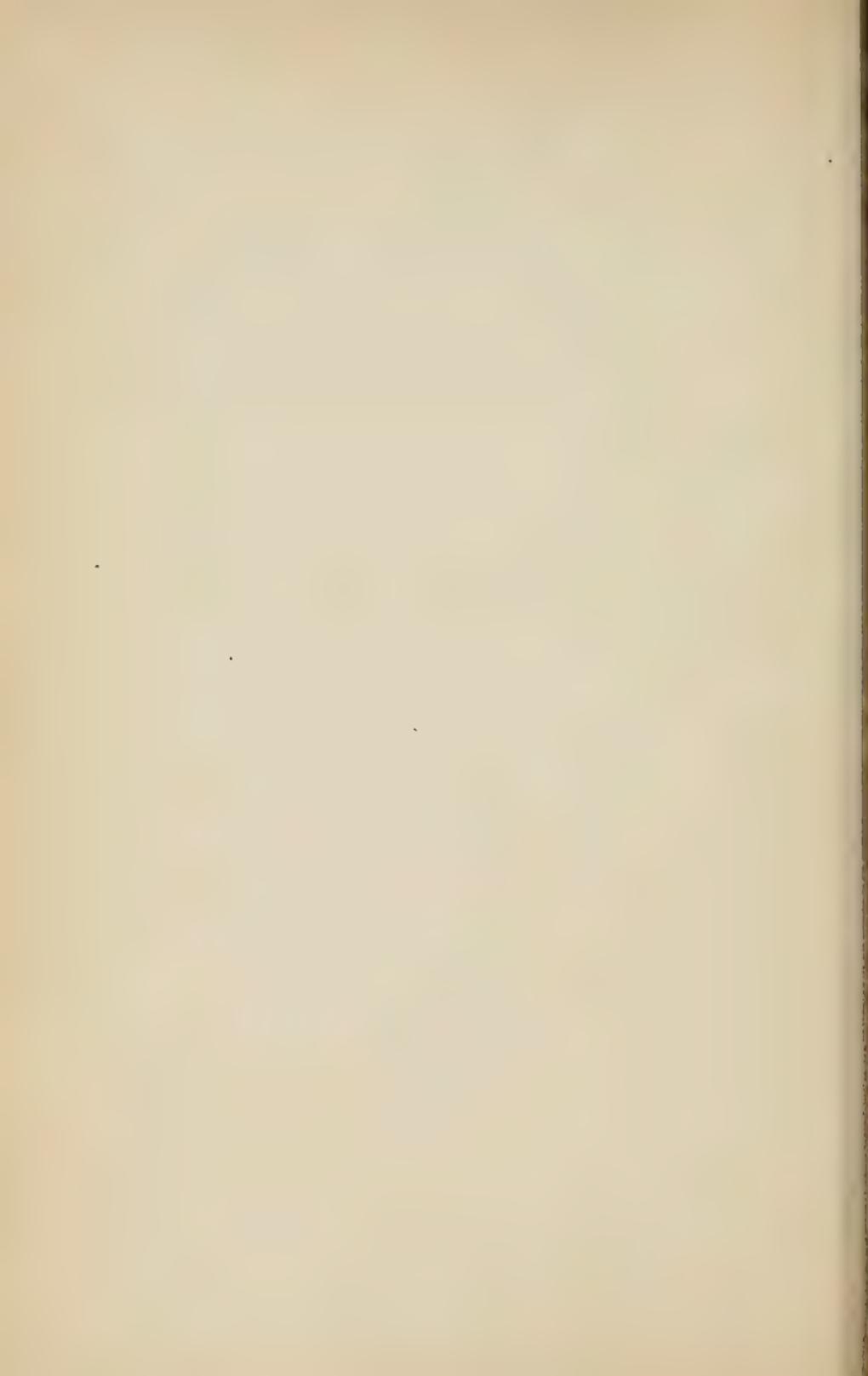
These requests he made with less hesitation, and with confidence that they would be fulfilled, from his knowledge of these gentlemen ; and he many times expressed a gratification of such an opportunity of decidedly and unequivocably certifying his respect for the literary judgement and integrity of Mr. Griswold, with whom his personal relations, on account of some unhappy misunderstanding, had for years been interrupted.

In this edition of my son's works, which is published for my benefit, it is a great pleasure for me to thank Mr. Griswold and Mr. Willis for their prompt fulfilment of the wishes of the dying poet, in labours, which demanded much time and attention, and which they

have performed without any other recompense than the happiness which rewards acts of duty and kindness. I add to these expressions of gratitude to them, my acknowledgement to J. R. Lowell, Esq. for his notices of Mr. Poe's genius and writings which are here published.

MARIA CLEMM.

POEMS PUBLISHED BEFORE 1845



THE HAPPIEST DAY, THE HAPPIEST HOUR

[*Tamerlane and other Poems*, 1827.]

THE happiest day—the happiest hour
 My sear'd and blighted heart hath known,
 The highest hope of pride and power,
 I feel hath flown.

Of power ! said I ? yes ! such I ween ;
 But they have vanish'd long, alas !
 The visions of my youth have been—
 But let them pass.

And, pride, what have I now with thee ?
 Another brow may even inherit 10
 The venom thou hast pour'd on me—
 Be still, my spirit !

The happiest day—the happiest hour
 Mine eyes shall see—have ever seen,
 The brightest glance of pride and power,
 I feel—have been :

But were that hope of pride and power
 Now offer'd, with the pain
 Even *then* I felt—that brightest hour
 I would not live again : 20

For on its wing was dark alloy,
 And, as it flutter'd—fell
 An essence—powerful to destroy
 A soul that knew it well.

STANZAS

[*Tamerlane and other Poems, 1827.*]

How often we forget all time, when lone
 Admiring Nature's universal throne;
 Her woods—her wilds—her mountains—the intense
 Reply of **HERS** to our intelligence!

[BYRON, *The Island.*]

1

In youth have I known one with whom the Earth
 In secret communing held—as he with it,
 In daylight, and in beauty from his birth:
 Whose fervid, flickering torch of life was lit
 From the sun and stars, whence he had drawn forth
 A passionate light—such for his spirit was fit—
 And yet that spirit knew not, in the hour
 Of its own fervour, what had o'er it power.

2

Perhaps it may be that my mind is wrought
 To a fever by the moonbeam that hangs o'er, 10
 But I will half believe that wild light fraught
 With more of sovereignty than ancient lore
 Hath ever told—or is it of a thought
 The unembodied essence, and no more,
 That with a quickening spell doth o'er us pass
 As dew of the night-time o'er the summer grass?

3

Doth o'er us pass, when, as th' expanding eye
 To the loved object—so the tear to the lid
 Will start, which lately slept in apathy?
 And yet it need not be—that object) hid 20

From us in life—but common—which doth lie
Each hour before us—but *then* only, bid
With a strange sound, as of a harp-string broken,
To awake us—’Tis a symbol and a token

4

Of what in other worlds shall be—and given
In beauty by our God, to those alone
Who otherwise would fall from life and Heaven
Drawn by their heart’s passion, and that tone,
That high tone of the spirit which hath striven
Tho’ not with Faith—with godliness—whose throne
With desperate energy ’t hath beaten down; 31
Wearing its own deep feeling as a crown.

EVENING STAR

[*Tamerlane and other Poems*, 1827.]

'TWAS noontide of summer,
 And mid-time of night ;
 And stars, in their orbits,
 Shone pale, thro' the light
 Of the brighter, cold moon,
 'Mid planets her slaves,
 Herself in the Heavens,
 Her beam on the waves.
 I gazed awhile
 On her cold smile ;
 Too cold—too cold for me—
 There pass'd, as a shroud,
 A fleecy cloud,
 And I turn'd away to thee,
 Proud Evening Star,
 In thy glory afar,
 And dearer thy beam shall be ;
 For joy to my heart
 Is the proud part
 Thou bearest in Heaven at night,
 And more I admire
 Thy distant fire,
 Than that colder, lowly light.

10

20

DREAMS

[*Tamerlane and other Poems, 1827.*]

OH ! that my young life were a lasting dream !
 My spirit not awakening, till the beam
 Of an Eternity should bring the morrow.
 Yes ! tho' that long dream were of hopeless sorrow,
 'Twere better than the cold reality
 Of waking life, to him whose heart must be,
 And hath been still, upon the lovely earth,
 A chaos of deep passion, from his birth.
 But should it be—that dream eternally
 Continuing—as dreams have been to me 10
 In my young boyhood—should it thus be given,
 'Twere folly still to hope for higher Heaven.
 For I have revell'd, when the sun was bright
 I' the summer sky, in dreams of living light
 And loveliness,—have left my very heart
 In climes of my imagining, apart
 From mine own home, with beings that have been
 Of mine own thought—what more could I have seen ?
 'Twas once—and only once—and the wild hour
 From my remembrance shall not pass—some power
 Or spell had bound me—'twas the chilly wind 21
 Came o'er me in the night, and left behind
 Its image on my spirit—or the moon
 Shone on my slumbers in her lofty noon
 Too coldly—or the stars—howe'er it was
 That dream was as that night-wind—let it pass.

I *have been* happy, tho' in a dream.
I have been happy—and I love the theme:
Dreams! in their vivid colouring of life,
As in that fleeting, shadowy, misty strife 30
Of semblance with reality, which brings
To the delirious eye, more lovely things
Of Paradise and Love—and all our own!
Than young Hope in his sunniest hour hath known.

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

[*Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems, 1829.*]

THY soul shall find itself alone
 'Mid dark thoughts of the grey tomb-stone ;
 Not one, of all the crowd, to pry
 Into thine hour of secrecy.

Be silent in that solitude,
 Which is not loneliness—for then
 The spirits of the dead, who stood
 In life before thee, are again
 In death around thee, and their will
 Shall overshadow thee ; be still.

10

The night, though clear, shall frown,
 And the stars shall not look down
 From their high thrones in the Heaven
 With light like hope to mortals given,
 But their red orbs, without beam,
 To thy weariness shall seem
 As a burning and a fever
 Which would cling to thee for ever.

Now are thoughts thou shalt not banish,
 Now are visions ne'er to vanish ;
 From thy spirit shall they pass
 No more, like dew-drop from the grass.

20

The breeze, the breath of God, is still,
And the mist upon the hill
Shadowy, shadowy, yet unbroken,
Is a symbol and a token.
How it hangs upon the trees,
A mystery of mysteries !

TO M—

[*Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems, 1829.*]

O ! I care not that my earthly lot
 Hath little of Earth in it,
 That years of love have been forgot
 In the fever of a minute :

I heed not that the desolate
 Are happier, sweet, than I,
 But that you meddle with my fate
 Who am a passer by.

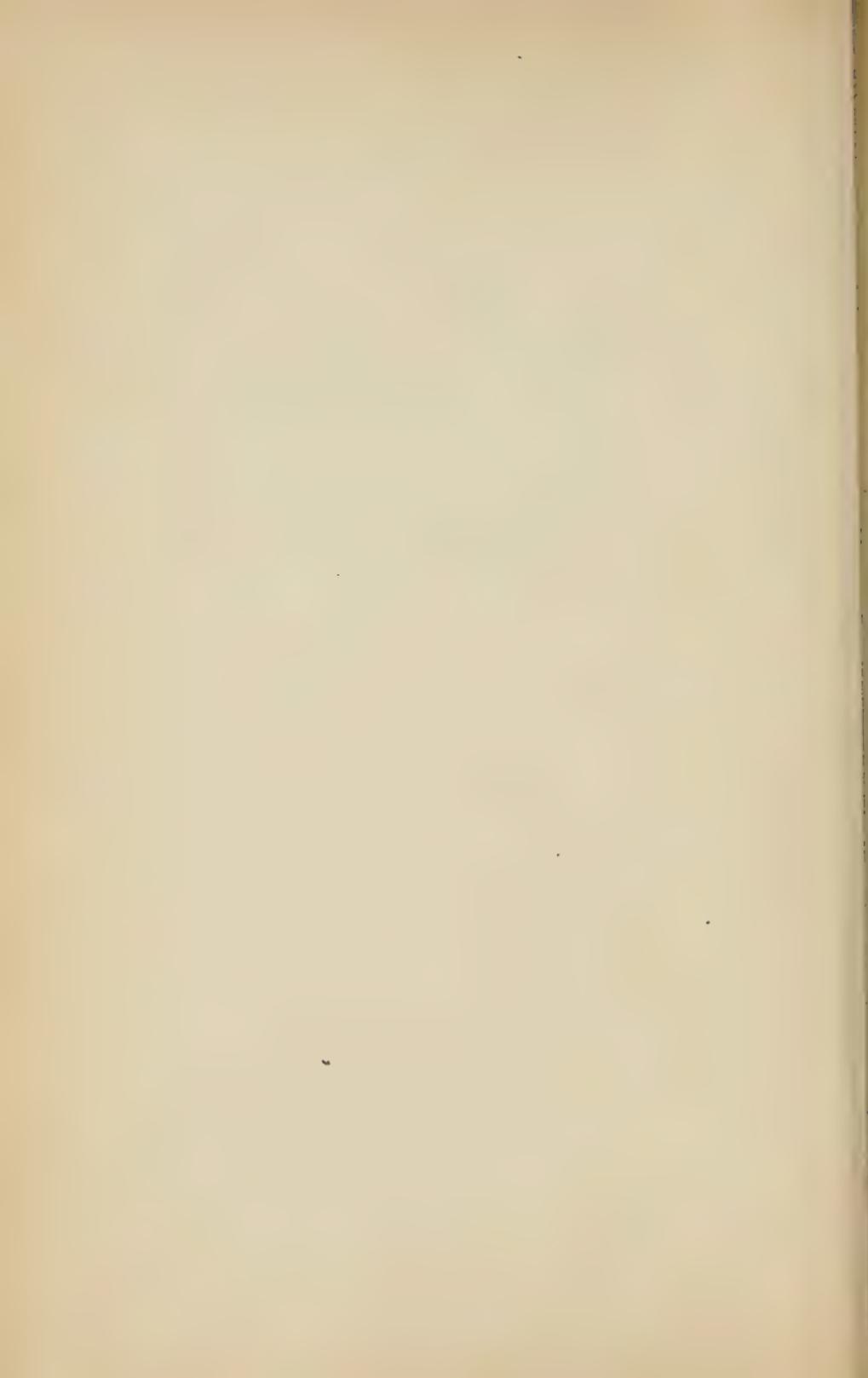
It *is* not that my founts of bliss .
 Are gushing—strange ! with tears—
 Or that the thrill of a single kiss
 Hath palsied many years—

'Tis not that the flowers of twenty springs
 Which have wither'd as they rose
 Lie dead on my heart-strings
 With the weight of an age of snows.

Not that the grass—O ! may it thrive !
 On my grave is growing or grown—
 But that, while I am dead yet alive
 I cannot be, lady, alone.

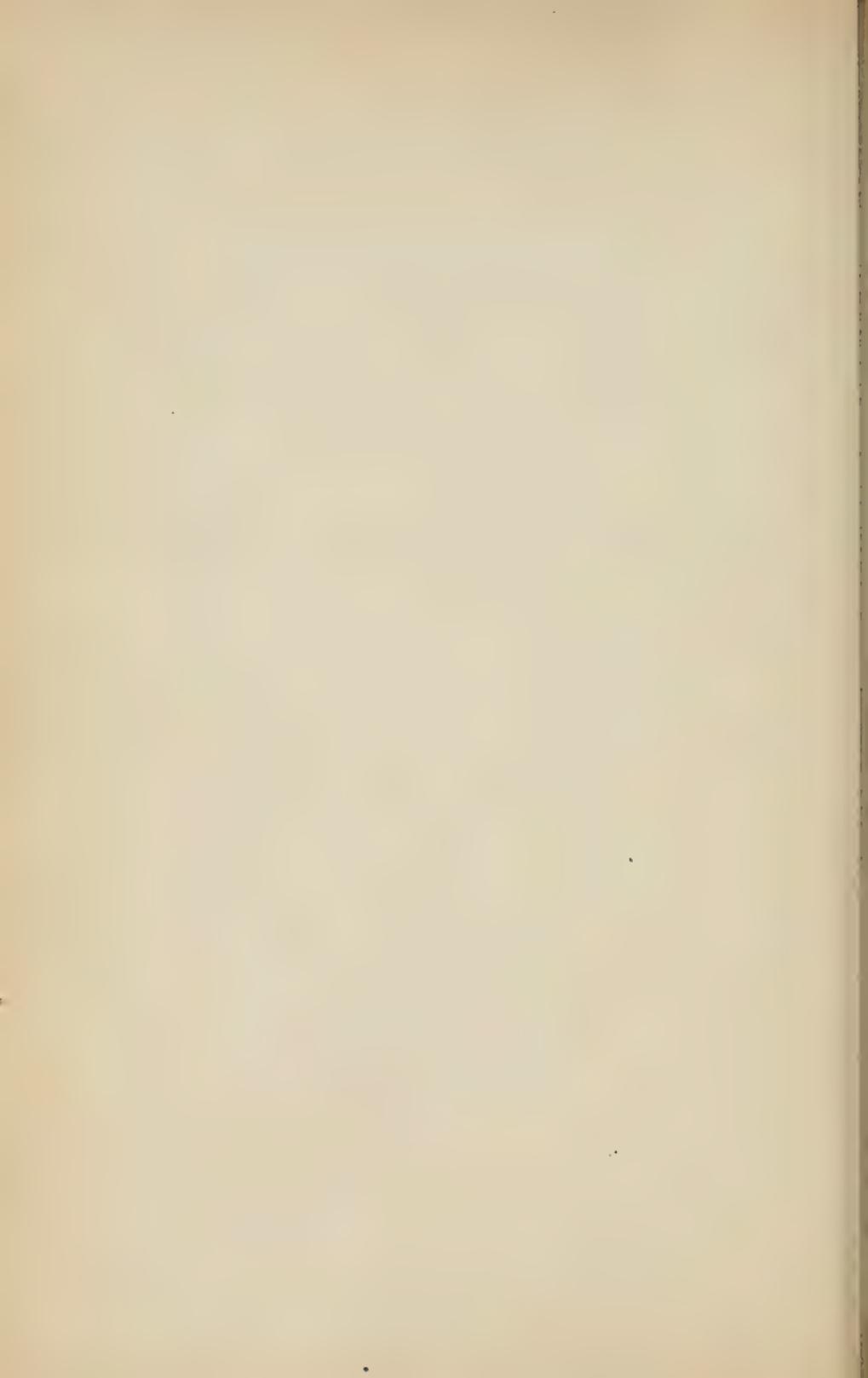
10

20



THE RAVEN AND OTHER POEMS

1845



TO THE NOBLEST OF HER SEX—

TO THE AUTHOR OF

‘THE DRAMA IN EXILE’—

TO MISS ELIZABETH BARRETT BARRETT,

OF ENGLAND,

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME,

WITH THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC ADMIRATION

AND WITH THE MOST SINCERE ESTEEM

E. A. P.

PREFACE

THESE trifles are collected and republished chiefly with a view to their redemption from the many improvements to which they have been subjected while going at random ‘the rounds of the press’. If what I have written is to circulate at all, I am naturally anxious that it should circulate as I wrote it. In defence of my own taste, nevertheless, it is incumbent upon me to say, that I think nothing in this volume of much value to the public, or very creditable to myself. Events not to be controlled have prevented me from making, at any time, any serious effort in what, under happier circumstances, would have been the field of my choice. With me poetry has been not a purpose, but a passion ; and the passions should be held in reverence ; they must not—they cannot at will be excited with an eye to the paltry compensations, or the more paltry commendations, of mankind.

E. A. P.

THE RAVEN

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,
 weak and weary,
 Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten
 lore,
 While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there
 came a tapping,
 As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my
 chamber door.
 'Tis some visitor,' I muttered, 'tapping at my
 chamber door—
 Only this, and nothing more.'

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak
 December,
 And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost
 upon the floor.
 Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had
 sought to borrow
 From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for
 the lost Lenore—
 For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels
 name Lenore—
 Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each
 purple curtain
 Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never
 felt before;
 So that now, to still the beating of my heart,
 I stood repeating,

“ ‘Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my
chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber
door ;—

This it is, and nothing more.’

Presently my soul grew stronger ; hesitating then
no longer,
‘ Sir,’ said I, ‘ or Madam, truly your forgiveness
I implore ;’ 20
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you
came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my
chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you’ —here I opened
wide the door ;—
 Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there
wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared
to dream before ;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness
gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered
word, ‘ Lenore !’
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the
word, ‘ Lenore !’—
 Merely this, and nothing more. 30

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within
me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than
before.

‘Surely,’ said I, ‘surely that is something at my window lattice:
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—
 ’Tis the wind and nothing more.’

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore;
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
 Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore.
‘Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,’
 I said, ‘art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from
the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore!’
 Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear
discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy
bore ; 50
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human
being
Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his
chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his
chamber door,
With such name as ‘Nevermore’.

But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust,
spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did
outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered—not a feather
then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered, ‘other friends
have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have
flown before.’
Then the bird said, ‘Nevermore.’ 60

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly
spoken,
'Doubtless,' said I, 'what it utters is its only stock
and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom un-
merciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs
one burden bore—

Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden
bore

Of "Never—nevermore".

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into
smiling,

Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird,
and bust and door;

Then upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to
linking

Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous
bird of yore—

What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and
ominous bird of yore

Meant in croaking 'Nevermore'.

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable
expressing

To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my
bosom's core;

This and more I sat divining, with my head at
ease reclining

On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight
gloated o'er,

But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight
gloating o'er,

She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then methought the air grew denser, perfumed
from an unseen censer

Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the
tufted floor.

'Wretch,' I cried, 'thy God hath lent thee--by
these angels he hath sent thee

Respite—respite and nepenthe, from thy memories
of Lenore !

Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this
lost Lenore !'

Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

' Prophet !' said I, ' thing of evil !—prophet still,
if bird or devil !—

Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed
thee here ashore,

Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land
enchanted—

On this home by horror haunted—tell me truly, I
implore—

Is there—is there balm in Gilead ?—tell me—tell me,
I implore !'

Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

90

' Prophet !' said I, ' thing of evil—prophet still,
if bird or devil !

By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God
we both adore—

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the
distant Aidenn,

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels
name Lenore—

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels
name Lenore.'

Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

' Be that word our sign in parting, bird or fiend,'
I shrieked, upstarting—

' Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's
Plutonian shore !

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy
soul hath spoken !

Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust
above my door ! 100

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form
from off my door !'

Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still
is sitting

On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber
door;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s
that is dreaming,

And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his
shadow on the floor ;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating
on the floor

Shall be lifted--nevermore !

THE VALLEY OF UNREST

ONCE it smiled a silent dell
 Where the people did not dwell ;
 They had gone unto the wars,
 Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
 Nightly, from their azure towers,
 To keep watch above the flowers,
 In the midst of which all day
 The red sunlight lazily lay.

Now each visitor shall confess
 The sad valley's restlessness.
 Nothing there is motionless—
 Nothing save the airs that brood
 Over the magic solitude.

Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
 That palpitate like the chill seas
 Around the misty Hebrides !

Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
 That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
 Uneasily, from morn till even,
 Over the violets there that lie

In myriad types of the human eye—
 Over the lilies there that wave
 And weep above a nameless grave !

They wave :—from out their fragrant tops
 Eternal dews come down in drops.

They weep :—from off their delicate stems
 Perennial tears descend in gems.

10

20

BRIDAL BALLAD

THE ring is on my hand,
 And the wreath is on my brow ;
 Satin and jewels grand
 Are all at my command,
 And I am happy now.

And my lord he loves me well ;
 But, when first he breathed his vow,
 I felt my bosom swell—
 For the words rang as a knell,
 And the voice seemed *his* who fell 10
 In the battle down the dell,
 And who is happy now.

But he spoke to re-assure me,
 And he kissed my pallid brow,
 While a reverie came o'er me,
 And to the church-yard bore me,
 And I sighed to him before me,
 Thinking him dead D'Elormie,
 ‘Oh, I am happy now !’

And thus the words were spoken, 20
 And this the plighted vow,
 And, though my faith be broken,
 And, though my heart be broken,
 Here is a ring, as token
 That I am happy now !

Would God I could awaken !
For I dream I know not how !
And my soul is sorely shaken
Lest an evil step be taken,—
Lest the dead who is forsaken
May not be happy now.

THE SLEEPER

AT midnight, in the month of June,
 I stand beneath the mystic moon.
 An opiate vapour, dewy, dim,
 Exhales from out her golden rim,
 And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
 Upon the quiet mountain top,
 Steals drowsily and musically
 Into the universal valley.
 The rosemary nods upon the grave ;
 The lily lolls upon the wave ; 10
 Wrapping the fog about its breast,
 The ruin moulders into rest ;
 Looking like Lethe, see ! the lake
 A conscious slumber seems to take,
 And would not, for the world, awake.
 All Beauty sleeps !—and lo ! where lies
 Irene, with her Destinies !

O, lady bright ! can it be right—
 This window open to the night ?
 The wanton airs, from the tree-top, 20
 Laughingly through the lattice drop—
 The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
 Flit through thy chamber in and out,
 And wave the curtain canopy
 So fitfully—so fearfully—
 Above the closed and fringed lid
 'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
 That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
 Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall !

Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress,
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps ! Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep !
Heaven have her in its sacred keep !
This chamber changed for one more holy, 40
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
For ever with unopened eye,
While the pale sheeted ghosts go by !

My love, she sleeps ! Oh, may her sleep
As it is lasting, so be deep !
Soft may the worms about her creep !
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold—
Some vault that oft has flung its black
And wingèd panels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls,
Of her grand family funerals—
Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone—
Some tomb from out whose sounding doo
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin !
It was the dead who groaned within.

THE COLISEUM

TYPE of the antique Rome ! Rich reliquary
 Of lofty contemplation left to Time
 By buried centuries of pomp and power !
 At length—at length—after so many days
 Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst,
 (Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie,) I
 I kneel, an altered and an humble man,
 Amid thy shadows, and so drink within
 My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory !

Vastness ! and Age ! and Memories of Eld ! 10
 Silence ! and Desolation ! and dim Night !
 I feel ye now—I feel ye in your strength—
 O spells more sure than e'er Judaean king
 Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane !
 O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee
 Ever drew down from out the quiet stars !

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls !
 Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold
 A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat !
 Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair 20
 Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle !
 Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,
 Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,
 Lit by the wan light of the hornèd moon,
 The swift and silent lizard of the stones !

But stay ! these walls—these ivy-clad arcades—
These mouldering plinths—these sad and blackened
shafts—
These vague entablatures—this crumbling frieze—
These shattered cornices—this wreck—this ruin—
These stones—alas ! these grey stones--are they
all—
30

All of the famed, and the colossal left
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me ?

' Not all '—the Echoes answer me—' not all !
Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,
As melody from Memnon to the Sun.

We rule the hearts of mightiest men—we rule
With a despotic sway all giant minds.

We are not impotent—we pallid stones.

Not all our power is gone—not all our fame—
40
Not all the magic of our high renown—
Not all the wonder that encircles us—
Not all the mysteries that in us lie—
Not all the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment,
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory.'

LENORE

All, broken is the golden bowl ! the spirit flown
forever !

Let the bell toll !—a saintly soul floats on the Stygian
river ;

And, Guy de Vere, hast *thou* no tear ?—weep now
or nevermore !

See ! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love,
Lenore !

Come ! let the burial rite be read—the funeral song
be sung !—

An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so
young—

A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so
young.

‘ Wretches ! ye loved her for her wealth and hated her
for her pride,

And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her—
that she died !

How *shall* the ritual, then, be read ?—the requiem how
be sung

By you—by yours, the evil eye,—by yours, the
slanderous tongue

That did to death the innocence that died, and died so
young ?’

Peccavimus ; but rave not thus ! and let a Sabbath
song

Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no
wrong

The sweet Lenore hath ‘ gone before ’, with Hope, that
flew beside,

Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have
been thy bride—

For her, the fair and *debonair*, that now so lowly lies,
The life upon her yellow hair but not within her
eyes—

The life still there, upon her hair—the death upon her
eyes.

‘ Avaunt ! avaunt ! from fiends below, the indignant
ghost is riven—

20

From Hell unto a high estate far up within the
Heaven—

From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the
King of Heaven !

Let no bell toll, then,—lest her soul, amid its hallowed
mirth,

Should catch the note as it doth float up from the
damnèd Earth !

And I!—to-night my heart is light !—no dirge will I
upraise,

But waft the angel on her flight with a Paean of old
days !’

CATHOLIC HYMN

At morn—at noon—at twilight dim—
Maria ! thou hast heard my hymn !
In joy and woe—in good and ill—
Mother of God, be with me still !
When the hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee ;
Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast
Darkly my Present and my Past,
Let my Future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine !

10

ISRAFEL

And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and
who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.—*Koran.*

IN Heaven a spirit doth dwell
 ‘ Whose heart-strings are a lute ; ’
 None sing so wildly well
 As the angel Israfel,
 And the giddy stars (so legends tell)
 Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
 Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
 In her highest noon,
 The enamoured moon
 Blushes with love,
 While, to listen, the red levin
 (With the rapid Pleiads, even,
 Which were seven,)
 Pauses in Heaven.

10

And they say (the starry choir
 And the other listening things)
 That Israfeli’s fire
 Is owing to that lyre
 By which he sits and sings—
 The trembling living wire
 Of those unusual strings.

20

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty—
Where Love's a grown up God—
Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore thou art not wrong;

Israfeli, who despisest

30

An unimpassioned song;

To thee the laurels belong,

Best bard, because the wisest!

Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above

With thy burning measures suit—
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
With the fervour of thy lute—
Well may the stars be mute !

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this

40

Is a world of sweets and sours;

Our flowers are merely—flowers,

And the shadow of thy perfect bliss

Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell

Where Israfel

Hath dwelt, and he where I,

He might not sing so wildly well

A mortal melody,

While a bolder note than this might swell

From my lyre within the sky.

DREAMLAND

By a route obscure and lonely,
 Haunted by ill angels only,
 Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
 On a black throne reigns upright,
 I have reached these lands but newly
 From an ultimate dim Thule—
 From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
 Out of SPACE—out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
 And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods, 10
 With forms that no man can discover
 For the tears that drip all over ;
 Mountains toppling evermore
 Into seas without a shore ;
 Seas that restlessly aspire,
 Surging, unto skies of fire ;
 Lakes that endlessly outspread
 Their lone waters—lone and dead,—
 Their still waters—still and chilly
 With the snows of the lolling lily. 20

By the lakes that thus outspread
 Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
 Their sad waters, sad and chilly
 With the snows of the lolling lily,—
 By the mountains—near the river
 Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever,—
 By the grey woods,—by the swamp
 Where the toad and the newt encamp,—

By the dismal tarns and pools
 Where dwell the Ghouls,—
 By each spot the most unholy—
 In each nook most melancholy,—
 There the traveller meets aghast
 Sheeted Memories of the Past—
 Shrouded forms that start and sigh
 As they pass the wanderer by—
 White-robed forms of friends long given,
 In agony, to the Earth—and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
 'Tis a peaceful, soothing region—
 For the spirit that walks in shadow
 'Tis—oh, 'tis an Eldorado !
 But the traveller, travelling through it,
 May not—dare not openly view it !
 Never its mysteries are exposed
 To the weak human eye unclosed ;
 So wills its King, who hath forbid
 The uplifting of the fringèd lid ;
 And thus the sad Soul that here passes
 Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

40

50

By a route obscure and lonely,
 Haunted by ill angels only,
 Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
 On a black throne reigns upright,
 I have wandered home but newly
 From this ultimate dim Thule.

SONNET—TO ZANTE

FAIR isle, that from the fairest of all flowers,
 Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take !
 How many memories of what radiant hours
 At sight of thee and thine at once awake !
 How many scenes of what departed bliss !
 How many thoughts of what entombèd hopes !
 How many visions of a maiden that is
 No more—no more upon thy verdant slopes !
No more ! alas, that magical sad sound
 Transforming all ! Thy charms shall please *no*
 more—10
 Thy memory *no more !* Accursèd ground
 Henceforth I hold thy flower-enamelled shore,
 O hyacinthine isle ! O purple Zante !
 ‘Isola d’oro ! Fior di Levante !’

THE CITY IN THE SEA

Lo ! Death has reared himself a throne
 In a strange city lying alone
 Far down within the dim West,
 Where the good and the bad and the worst and
 the best
 Have gone to their eternal rest.
 There shrines and palaces and towers
 (Time-eaten towers that tremble not !)
 Resemble nothing that is ours.
 Around, by lifting winds forgot,
 Resignedly beneath the sky
 The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
 On the long night-time of that town ;
 But light from out the lurid sea
 Streams up the turrets silently—
 Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
 Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
 Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
 Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
 Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
 Up many and many a marvellous shrine
 Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
 The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly beneath the sky
 The melancholy waters lie.
 So blend the turrets and shadows there
 That all seem pendulous in air,

10

20

While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves 30
Yawn level with the luminous waves ;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gaily-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed ;
For no ripples curl, alas !
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been 40
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air !
The wave—there is a movement there !
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow— ^{sunset}
The hours are breathing faint and low—
And when, amid no earthly moans, 50
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

TO ONE IN PARADISE

THOU wast all that to me, love,
 For which my soul did pine—
 A green isle in the sea, love,
 A fountain and a shrine,
 All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
 And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last !
 Ah, starry Hope ! that didst arise
 But to be overcast !

A voice from out the Future cries, 10
 ‘On ! on !’—but o'er the Past
 (Dim gulf !) my spirit hovering lies
 Mute, motionless, aghast !

For, alas ! alas ! with me
 The light of Life is o'er !
 ‘No more—no more—no more—’
 (Such language holds the solemn sea
 To the sands upon the shore)
 Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree
 Or the stricken eagle soar ! 20

And all my days are trances,
 And all my nightly dreams
 Are where thy grey eye glances,
 And where thy footstep gleams—
 In what ethereal dances,
 By what eternal streams.

EULALIE—A SONG

I DWELT alone
 In a world of moan,
 And my soul was a stagnant tide,
 Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my
 blushing bride—
 Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my
 smiling bride.

Ah, less—less bright
 The stars of the night
 Than the eyes of the radiant girl!
 And never a flake
 That the vapour can make 10
 With the moon-tints of purple and pearl,
 Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unre-
 garded curl—
 Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most
 humble and careless curl.

Now Doubt—now Pain
 Come never again,
 For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,
 And all day long
 Shines, bright and strong,
 Astarté within the sky,
 While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her
 matron eye— 20
 While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her
 violet eye.

TO F—S S. O—D

[Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood.]

THOU wouldst be loved?—then let thy heart
From its present pathway part not!
Being everything which now thou art,
Be nothing which thou art not.
So with the world thy gentle ways,
Thy grace, thy more than beauty,
Shall be an endless theme of praise,
And love—a simple duty.

TO F—

[F— is, presumably, Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood.]

BELOVED! amid the earnest woes
That crowd around my earthly path—
(Drear path, alas! where grows
Not even one lonely rose)—
My soul at least a solace hath
In dreams of thee, and therein knows
An Eden of bland repose.

And thus thy memory is to me
Like some enchanted far-off isle
In some tumultuous sea—
Some ocean throbbing far and free
With storms—but where meanwhile
Serenest skies continually
Just o'er that one bright island smile.

SONNET—SILENCE

THERE are some qualities—some incorporate things,
That have a double life, which thus is made
A type of that twin entity which springs
From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.
There is a two-fold *Silence*—sea and shore—
Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn graces,
Some human memories and tearful lore,
Render him terrorless: his name's 'No More'.
He is the corporate Silence: dread him not! 10
 No power hath he of evil in himself;
But should some urgent fate (untimely lot!)
 Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
 No foot of man,) commend thyself to God!

THE CONQUEROR WORM.

Lo ! 'tis a gala night
 Within the lonesome latter years !
 An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
In veils, and drowned in tears,
 Sit in a theatre, to see
A play of hopes and fears,
 While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
 Mutter and mumble low,
 And hither and thither fly—
 10
 Mere puppets they, who come and go
 At bidding of vast formless things
 That shift the scenery to and fro,
 Flapping from out their Condor wings
 Invisible Woe !

That motley drama—oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot !
 With its Phantom chased for evermore,
 By a crowd that seize it not,
 Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot,
 20
 And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
 And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
A crawling shape intrude !
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude !
It writhes !—it writhes !—with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food, 30
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all !
And, over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm
While the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, ‘Man,’
And its hero the Conqueror Worm. 40

THE HAUNTED PALACE

IN the greenest of our valleys
 By good angels tenanted,
 Once a fair and stately palace—
 Radiant palace—reared its head.
 In the monarch Thought's dominion—
 It stood there !
 Never seraph spread a pinion
 Over fabrie half so fair !

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
 On its ~~roof~~¹⁰ did float and flow,
 (This—all this—was in the olden
 Time long ago,)
 And every gentle air that dallied,
 In that sweet day,
 Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
 A wingèd odour went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
 Through two luminous windows, saw
 Spirits moving musically,
 To a lute's well-tunèd law,
 Round about a throne where, sitting
 (Porphyrogen!²⁰)
 In state his glory well-befitting,
 The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

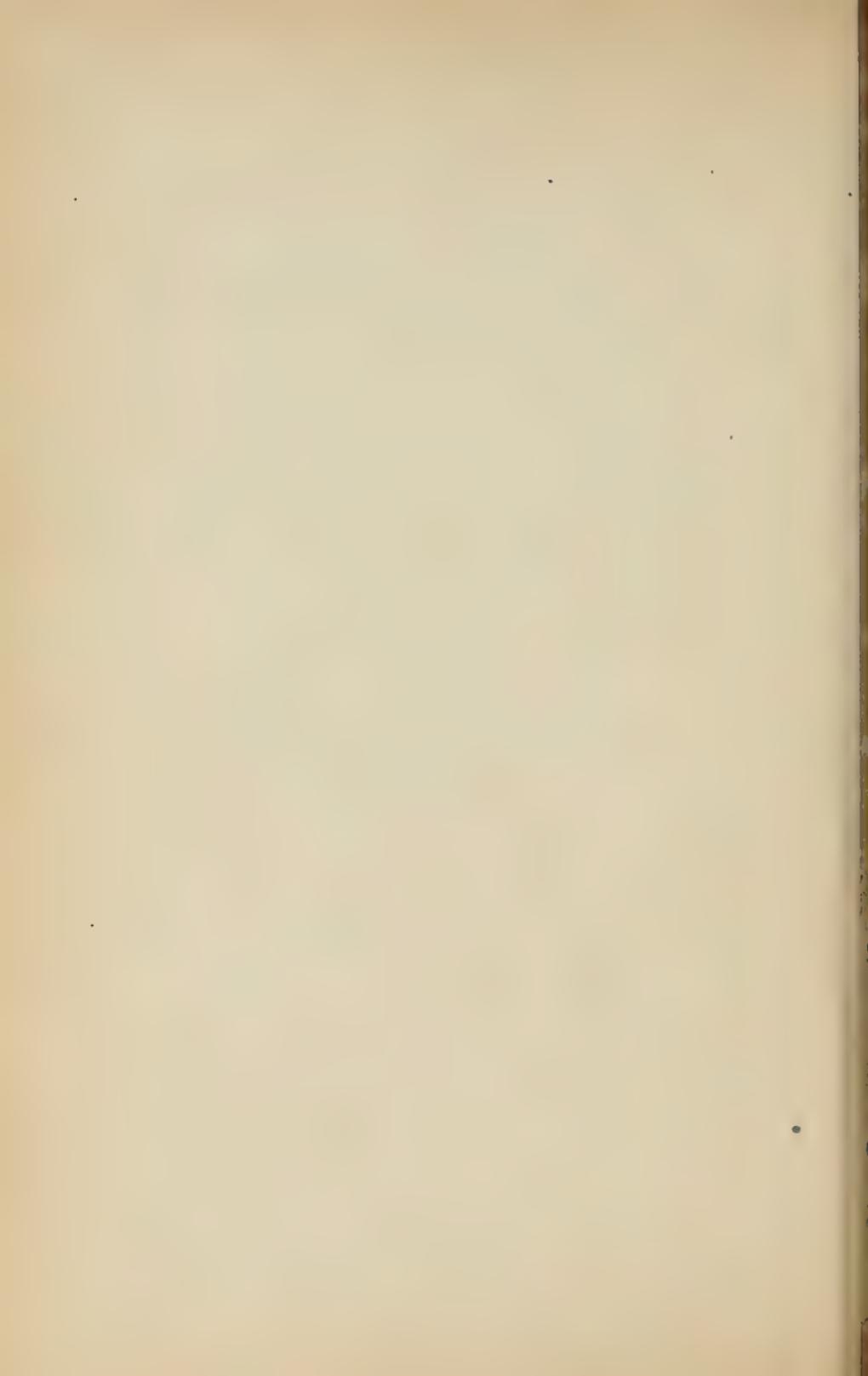
3

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow¹
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

40

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever
And laugh—but smile no more.

¹ The 1845 text has 'sorrow' for morrow. But this is obviously a misprint.—Ed.



SCENES FROM 'POLITIAN'
AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

POLITIAN, Earl of Leicester.

DI BROGLIO, a Roman Duke.

COUNT CASTIGLIONE, his son.

BALDAZZAR, Duke of Surrey, Friend to Politian.

A MONK.

LALAGE.

ALESSANDRA, betrothed to Castiglione.

JACINTA, maid to Lalage.

The Scene lies in Rome.

SCENES FROM 'POLITIAN'

AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA

I

Rome.—A Hall in a Palace.

ALESSANDRA and CASTIGLIONE.

ALESSANDRA.

Thou art sad, Castiglione.

CASTIGLIONE.

Sad!—not I.

Oh, I'm the happiest, happiest man in Rome !
A few days more, thou knowest, my Alessandra,
Will make thee mine. Oh, I am very happy !

ALESSANDRA.

Methinks thou hast a singular way of showing
Thy happiness!—what ails thee, cousin of mine?
Why didst thou sigh so deeply?

CASTIGLIONE.

Did I sigh?

I was not conscious of it. It is a fashion,
A silly—a most silly fashion I have 9
When I am *very* happy. Did I sigh? (*sighing.*)

ALESSANDRA.

Thou didst. Thou art not well. Thou hast indulged
Too much of late, and I am vexed to see it.
Late hours and wine, Castiglione,—these
Will ruin thee! thou art already altered—
Thy looks are haggard—nothing so wears away
The constitution as late hours and wine.

CASTIGLIONE (*musing*).

Nothing, fair cousin, nothing—not even deep sorrow—
Wears it away like evil hours and wine.
I will amend.

ALESSANDRA.

Do it! I would have thee drop
Thy riotous company, too—~~f~~ollows low born— 20
Ill suit the like with old Di Broglio's heir
And Alessandra's husband.

CASTIGLIONE.

I will drop them.

ALESSANDRA.

Thou wilt thou must. Attend thou also more
To thy dress and equipage—they are over plain
For thy lofty rank and fashion—much depends
Upon appearances.

CASTIGLIONE.

I'll see to it.

ALESSANDRA.

Then see to it!—pay more attention, sir,
To a becoming carriage—much thou wantest
In dignity.

CASTIGLIONE.

Much, much, oh! much I want
In proper dignity.

ALESSANDRA (*haughtily*).

Thou mockest me, sir.

30

CASTIGLIONE (*abstractedly*).

Sweet, gentle Lalage!

ALESSANDRA.

Heard I aright?

I speak to him—he speaks of Lalage!

Sir Count! (*places her hand on his shoulder*) what art thou dreaming? (*aside*) He's not well! What ails thee, sir?

CASTIGLIONE (*starting*)

Cousin! fair cousin!—madam!

I crave thy pardon—indeed I am not well—Your hand from off my shoulder, if you please. This air is most oppressive!—Madam—the Duke!

Enter DI BROGLIO.

DI BROGLIO.

My son, I've news for thee!—hey?—what's the matter? (*observing Alessandra.*)

I' the pouts? Kiss her, Castiglione! kiss her, You dog! and make it up, I say, this minute! ⁴⁰ I've news for you both. Politian is expected Hourly in Rome—Politian, Earl of Leicester! We'll have him at the wedding. 'Tis his first visit To the imperial city.

ALESSANDRA.

What! Politian
Of Britain, Earl of Leicester?

DI BROGLIO.

The same, my love.

We'll have him at the wedding. A man quite young In years, but grey in fame. I have not seen him, But Rumour speaks of him as of a prodigy Preëminent in arts and arms, and wealth, And high descent. We'll have him at the wedding. ⁵⁰

ALESSANDRA.

I have heard much of this Politian.
Gay, volatile and giddy—is he not?
And little given to thinking.

DI BROGLIO.

Far from it, love.

No branch, they say, of all philosophy
 So deep abstruse he has not mastered it.
 Learned as few are learned.

ALESSANDRA.

'Tis very strange!

I have known men have seen Politian
 And sought his company. They speak of him
 As of one who entered madly into life,
 Drinking the cup of pleasure to the dregs. 60

CASTIGLIONE.

Ridiculous! Now *I* have seen Politian
 And know him well—nor learned nor mirthful he.
 He is a dreamer, and a man shut out
 From common passions.

DI BROGLIO.

Children, we disagree.

Let us go forth and taste the fragrant air
 Of the garden. Did I dream, or did I hear
 Politian was a melancholy man? (Exeunt.)

II

ROME.—*A Lady's apartment, with a window open and looking into a garden.* LALAGE, in deep mourning, reading at a table on which lie some books and a hand mirror. In the background JACINTA (a servant maid) leans carelessly upon a chair.

LALAGE.

Jacinta, is it thou?

JACINTA (*perily*).

Yes, ma'am, I'm here.

LALAGE.

I did not know, Jacinta, you were in waiting.
 Sit down!—let not my presence trouble you—
 Sit down!—for I am humble, most humble.

JACINTA (*aside*).

'Tis time.

(JACINTA seats herself in a side-long manner upon the chair, resting her elbows upon the back, and regarding her mistress with a contemptuous look. LALAGE continues to read.)

LALAGE.

'It in another climate, so he said,
 'Bore a bright golden flower, but not i' this soil !'
 (pauses—turns over some leaves, and resumes.)
 'No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower—
 'But Ocean ever to refresh mankind
 'Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind.'
 O, beautiful!—most beautiful!—how like
 To what my fevered soul doth dream of Heaven!
 O happy land! (pauses.) She died!—the maiden died!
 O still more happy maiden who couldst die! SI
 Jacinta!

(JACINTA returns no answer, and LALAGE presently resumes.)

Again!—a similar tale
 Told of a beauteous dame beyond the sea!
 Thus speaketh one Ferdinand in the words of the play—
 'She died full young'—one Bossola answers him—
 'I think not so—her infelicity
 'Seemed to have years too many'—Ah luckless lady!
 Jacinta! (still no answer.)

Here's a far sterner story,
 But like—oh, very like in its despair—90
 Of that Egyptian queen, winning so easily
 A thousand hearts—losing at length her own.
 She died. Thus endeth the history—and her maids
 Lean over her and weep—two gentle maids
 With gentle names—Eiros and Charnion!
 Rainbow and Dove!—Jacinta!

JACINTA (*pettishly*).

Madam, what *is* it?

LALAGE.

Wilt thou, my good Jacinta, be so kind
 As go down in the library and bring me
 The Holy Evangelists?

JACINTA.

Pshaw!

(*Exit.*)

LALAGE.

If there be balm 100
 For the wounded spirit in Gilead it is there!
 Dew in the night-time of my bitter trouble
 Will there be found—‘dew sweeter far than that
 Which hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill.’

(*Re-enter JACINTA, and throws a volume on
 the table.*)

There, ma'am, 's the book. Indeed she is very
 troublesome. (Aside.)

LALAGE (*astonished*).

What didst thou say, Jacinta? Have I done aught
 To grieve thee or to vex thee?—I am sorry.
 For thou hast served me long and ever been
 Trustworthy and respectful. (resumes her reading.)

JACINTA (*aside*).

I can't believe

She has any more jewels—no—no—she gave me all.

110

LALAGE.

What didst thou say, Jacinta? Now I bethink me
Thou hast not spoken lately of thy wedding.
How fares good Ugo?—and when is it to be?
Can I do aught?—is there no farther aid
Thou needest, Jacinta?

JACINTA.

Is there no farther aid!

That's meant for me (*aside*). I'm sure, madam, you
need not

Be always throwing those jewels in my teeth.

LALAGE.

Jewels! Jacinta,—now indeed, Jacinta,
I thought not of the jewels.

JACINTA.

Oh! perhaps not!

But then I might have sworn it. After all, 120
There's Ugo says the ring is only paste,
For he's sure the Count Castiglione never
Would have given a real diamond to such as you;
And at the best I'm certain, madam, you cannot
Have use for jewels *now*. But I might have sworn it.

(Exit.)

(*LALAGE bursts into tears and leans her head upon the table—after a short pause raises it.*)

LALAGE.

Poor Lalage!—and is it come to this?
Thy servant maid!—but courage!—'tis but a viper
Whom thou hast cherished to sting thee to the soul!

(*Taking up the mirror.*)

Ha ! here at least's a friend—too much a friend
 In earlier days—a friend will not deceive thee. 130
 Fair mirror and true ! now tell me (for thou canst)
 A tale—a pretty tale—and heed thou not
 Though it be rife with woe. It answers me.
 It speaks of sunken eyes, and wasted cheeks,
 And Beauty long deceased—remembers me
 Of Joy departed—Hope, the Seraph Hope,
 Inurnèd and entombed :—now, in a tone
 Low, sad, and solemn, but most audible,
 Whispers of early grave untimely yawning
 For ruined maid. Fair mirror and true—thou liest
 not !

140

*Thou hast no end to gain—no heart to break—
 Castiglione lied who said he loved—
 Thou true—he false !—false !—false !*

(While she speaks, a monk enters her apartment, and approaches unobserved.)

MONK.

Refuge thou hast,
 Sweet daughter, in Heaven. Think of eternal things !
 Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray !

LALAGE (*arising hurriedly*).

I cannot pray !—My soul is at war with God !
 The frightful sounds of merriment below
 Disturb my senses—go ! I cannot pray—
 The sweet airs from the garden worry me ! 150
 Thy presence grieves me—go !—thy priestly raiment
 Fills me with dread—thy ebony crucifix
 With horror and awe !

MONK.

Think of thy precious soul !

LALAGE.

Think of my early days!—think of my father
 And mother in Heaven! think of our quiet home,
 And the rivulet that ran before the door!
 Think of my little sisters!—think of them!
 And think of me!—think of my trusting love
 And confidence—his vows—my ruin—think—think
 Of my unspeakable misery! — begone! 160
 Yet stay! yet stay!—what was it thou saidst of
 prayer
 And penitence? Didst thou not speak of faith
 And vows before the throne?

MONK.

I did.

LALAGE.

'Tis well,

There *is* a vow were fitting should be made—
 A sacred vow, imperative, and urgent,
 A solemn vow!

MONK.

Daughter, this zeal is well!

LALAGE.

Father, this zeal is anything but well!
 Hast thou a crucifix fit for this thing?
 A crucifix whereon to register
 This sacred vow? 170

(He hands her his own.)

Not that—Oh! no!—no!—no!

(Shuddering.)

Not that! Not that!—I tell thee, holy man.
 Thy raiments and thy ebony cross affright me!
 Stand back! I have a crucifix myself,—
 I have a crucifix! Methinks 'twere fitting

The deed—the vow—the symbol of the deed—
And the deed's register should tally, father!

(Draws a cross-handled dagger, and raises it on high.)

Behold the cross wherewith a vow like mine
Is written in Heaven !

MONK.

Thy words are madness, daughter,
And speak a purpose unholy—thy lips are livid—
Thine eyes are wild—tempt not the wrath divine !
Pause ere too late!—oh, be not—be not rash ! 182
Swear not the oath—oh, swear it not !

LALAGE.

'Tis sworn !

III

An apartment in a Palace. POLITIAN and BALDAZZAR.

BALDAZZAR.

—Arouse thee now, Politian !
Thou must not—nay indeed, indeed, thou shalt not
Give way unto these humours. Be thyself !
Shake off the idle fancies that beset thee,
And live, for now thou diest !

POLITIAN.

Not so, Baldazzar
Surely I live.

BALDAZZAR.

Politian, it doth grieve me
To see thee thus.

POLITIAN.

Baldazzar, it doth grieve me 190
To give thee cause for grief, my honoured friend.
Command me, sir ! what wouldest thou have me do ?
At thy behest I will shake off that nature
Which from my forefathers I did inherit,
Which from my mother's milk I did imbibe,
And be no more Politian, but some other.
Command me, sir !

BALDAZZAR.

To the field, then—to the field—
To the senate or the field.

POLITIAN.

Alas ! alas !

There is an imp would follow me even there !
There is an imp *hath* followed me even there ! 200
There is——what voice was that ?

BALDAZZAR.

I heard it not.

I heard not any voice except thine own,
And the echo of thine own.

POLITIAN.

Then I but dreamed.

BALDAZZAR.

Give not thy soul to dreams : the camp—the court,
Befit thee—Fame awaits thee—Glory calls—
And her, the trumpet-tongued, thou wilt not hear
In harkening to imaginary sounds
And phantom voices.

POLITIAN.

It *is* a phantom voice !

Didst thou not hear it *then* ?

BALDAZZAR.

I heard it not.

POLITIAN.

Thou heardst it not!—Baldazzar, speak no more
To me, Politian, of thy camps and courts. 211
Oh! I am sick, sick, sick, even unto death,
Of the hollow and high-sounding vanities
Of the populous Earth! Bear with me yet awhile!
We have been boys together—schoolfellows—
And now are friends—yet shall not be so long—
For in the eternal city thou shalt do me
A kind and gentle office, and a Power—
A Power august, benignant and supreme—
Shall then absolve thee of all further duties 220
Unto thy friend.

BALDAZZAR.

Thou speakest a fearful riddle
I *will* not understand.

POLITIAN.

Yet now as Fate
Approaches, and the Hours are breathing low,
The sands of Time are changed to golden grains,
And dazzle me, Baldazzar. Alas! alas!
I *cannot* die, having within my heart
So keen a relish for the beautiful
As hath been kindled within it. Methinks the air
Is balmier now than it was wont to be—
Rich melodies are floating in the winds— 230
A rarer loveliness bedecks the earth—
And with a holier lustre the quiet moon
Sitteth in Heaven.—Hist! hist! thou canst not say
Thou hearest not *now*, Baldazzar?

BALDAZZAR.

Indeed I hear not.

POLITIAN.

Not hear it!—listen now!—listen!—the faintest sound
 And yet the sweetest that ear ever heard!
 A lady's voice!—and sorrow in the tone!
 Baldazzar, it oppresses me like a spell!
 Again!—again!—how solemnly it falls
 Into my heart of hearts! that eloquent voice 240
 Surely I never heard—yet it were well
 Had I *but* heard it with its thrilling tones
 In earlier days!

BALDAZZAR.

I myself hear it now.

Be still!—the voice, if I mistake not greatly,
 Proceeds from yonder lattice—which you may see
 Very plainly through the window—it belongs,
 Does it not? unto this palace of the Duke?
 The singer is undoubtedly beneath
 The roof of his Excellency—and perhaps
 Is even that Alessandra of whom he spoke 250
 As the betrothed of Castiglione,
 His son and heir.

POLITIAN.

Be still!—it comes again!

VOICE (*very faintly*).

'And is thy heart so strong
 As for to leave me thus
 Who hath loved thee so long
 In wealth and woe among?
 And is thy heart so strong
 As for to leave me thus?

Say nay—say nay!' 260

BALDAZZAR.

The song is English, and I oft have heard it
In merry England—never so plaintively—
Hist! hist! it comes again!

VOICE (*more loudly*).

'Is it so strong
As for to leave me thus
Who hath loved thee so long
In wealth and woe among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?

Say nay—say nay!' 270

BALDAZZAR.

'Tis hushed and all is still!

POLITIAN.

All *is not* still!

BALDAZZAR.

Let us go down.

POLITIAN.

Go down, Baldazzar, go!

BALDAZZAR.

The hour is growing late—the Duke awaits us,—
Thy presence is expected in the hall
Below. What ails thee, Earl Politian?

VOICE (*distinctly*).

'Who hath loved thee so long
In wealth and woe among,
And is thy heart so strong?
Say nay—say nay!'

BALDAZZAR.

Let us descend!—'tis time. Politian, give 280
These fancies to the wind. Remember, pray,

Your bearing lately savoured much of rudeness
Unto the Duke. Arouse thee ! and remember !

POLITIAN.

Remember ? I do. Lead on ! I *do* remember.

(*Going.*)

Let us descend. Believe me I would give,
Freely would give the broad lands of my earldom
To look upon the face hidden by yon lattice—
'To gaze upon that veiled face, and hear
Once more that silent tongue.'

BALDAZZAR.

Let me beg you, sir,
Descend with me—the Duke may be offended. 290
Let us go down, I pray you.

VOICE (*loudly*).

Say nay !—say nay !

POLITIAN (*aside*).

'Tis strange !—'tis very strange—methought the
voice
Chimed in with my desires, and bade me stay !

(*Approaching the window.*)

Sweet voice ! I heed thee, and will surely stay.
Now be this Fancy, by Heaven ! or be it Fate,
Still will I not descend. Baldazzar make
Apology unto the Duke for me ;
I go not down to-night.

BALDAZZAR.

Your lordship's pleasure
Shall be attended to. Good-night, Politian.

POLITIAN.

Good-night, my friend, good-night.

300

IV

The gardens of a Palace—Moonlight.

LALAGE and POLITIAN.

LALAGE.

And dost thou speak of love
To *me*, Politian?—dost thou speak of love
To Lalage?—ah, woe—ah, woe is me!
This mockery is most cruel—most cruel indeed!

POLITIAN.

Weep not! oh, sob not thus!—thy bitter tears
Will madden me. Oh, mourn not, Lalage—
Be comforted! I know—I know it all,
And still I speak of love. Look at me, brightest
And beautiful Lalage!—turn here thine eyes!
Thou askest me if I could speak of love, 310
Knowing what I know, and seeing what I have seen.
Thou askest me that—and thus I answer thee—
Thus on my bended knee I answer thee.

(Kneeling.)

Sweet Lalage, *I love thee—love thee—love thee*;
Thro' good and ill—tho' weal and woe *I love thee*.
Not mother, with her first-born on her knee,
Thrills with intenser love than I for thee.
Not on God's altar, in any time or clime,
Burned there a holier fire than burneth now
Within my spirit for thee. And do I love? 320

(Arising.)

Even for thy woes I love thee—even for thy woes—
Thy beauty and thy woes.

LALAGE.

Alas, proud Earl,
 Thou dost forget thyself, remembering me !
 How, in thy father's halls, among the maidens
 Pure and reproachless of thy princely line,
 Could the dishonoured Lalage abide ?
 Thy wife, and with a tainted memory—
 My seared and blighted name, how would it tally
 With the ancestral honours of thy house,
 And with thy glory ?

POLITIAN.

Speak not to me of glory ! 330
 I hate—I loathe the name ; I do abhor
 The unsatisfactory and ideal thing.
 Art thou not Lalage and I Politian ?
 Do I not love—art thou not beautiful—
 What need we more ? Ha ! glory !—now speak not
 of it.

By all I hold most sacred and most solemn—
 By all my wishes now—my fears hereafter—
 By all I scorn on earth and hope in heaven—
 There is no deed I would more glory in,
 Than in thy cause to scoff at this same glory 340
 And trample it under foot. What matters it—
 What matters it, my fairest, and my best,
 That we go down unhonoured and forgotten
 Into the dust—so we descend together.
 Descend together—and then—and then, perchance—

LALAGE.

Why dost thou pause, Politian ?

POLITIAN.

And then, perchance
 Arise together, Lalage, and roam

The starry and quiet dwellings of the blest,
And still—

LALAGE.

Why dost thou pause, Politian ?

POLITIAN.

And still *together—together*.

LALAGE.

Now Earl of Leicester ! 350

Thou *lovest* me, and in my heart of hearts
I feel thou lovest me truly.

POLITIAN.

Oh, Lalage !

(*Throwing himself upon his knee.*)

And lovest thou *me* ?

LALAGE.

Hist ! hush ! within the gloom
Of yonder trees methought a figure past—
A spectral figure, solemn, and slow, and noiseless—
Like the grim shadow Conscience, solemn and noise-
less.

(*Walks across and returns.*)

I was mistaken—'twas but a giant bough
Stirred by the autumn wind. Politian !

POLITIAN.

My Lalage—my love ! why art thou moved ?
Why dost thou turn so pale ? Not Conscience' self, 360
Far less a shadow which thou likenest to it,
Should shake the firm spirit thus. But the night wind
Is chilly—and these melancholy boughs
Throw over all things a gloom.

LALAGE.

Politian !

Thou speakest to me of love. Knowest thou the land



With which all tongues are busy—a land new found—
Miraculously found by one of Genoa—
A thousand leagues within the golden west?
A fairy land of flowers, and fruit, and sunshine,
And crystal lakes, and over-arching forests, 370
And mountains, around whose towering summits the
winds

Of Heaven untrammelled flow—which air to breathe
Is Happiness now, and will be Freedom hereafter
In days that are to come?

POLITIAN.

O, wilt thou—wilt thou
Fly to that Paradise—my Lalage, wilt thou
Fly thither with me? There Care shall be forgotten,
And Sorrow shall be no more, and Eros be all.
And life shall then be mine, for I will live
For thee, and in thine eyes—and thou shalt be
No more a mourner—but the radiant Joys 380
Shall wait upon thee, and the angel Hope
Attend thee ever; and I will kneel to thee
And worship thee, and call thee my beloved,
My own, my beautiful, my love, my wife,
My all;—oh, wilt thou—wilt thou, Lalage,
Fly thither with me?

LALAGE.

A deed is to be done—

Castiglione lives!

POLITIAN.

And he shall die!

(Exit.)

LALAGE (after a pause).

And—he—shall—die!—alas!

Castiglione die? Who spoke the words?

Where am I?—what was it he said?—Politian! 390
 Thou *art* not gone—thou art not *gone*, Politian!
 I *feel* thou art not gone—yet dare not look,
 Lest I behold thee not; thou *couldest* not go
 With those words upon thy lips—O, speak to me!
 And let me hear thy voice—one word—one word,
 To say thou art not gone,—one little sentence,
 To say how thou dost scorn—how thou dost hate
 My womanly weakness. Ha! ha! thou *art* not gone—
 O speak to me! I *knew* thou wouldst not go!
 I knew thou wouldst not, couldst not, *durst* not go. 400
 Villain, thou *art* not gone—thou mockest me!
 · And thus I clutch thee—thus!—He is gone,
 he is gone—
 Gone—gone. Where am I?—’tis well—’tis very
 well!
 So that the blade be keen—the blow be sure,
 ’Tis well, ’tis *very* well—alas! alas!

V

The suburbs. POLITIAN alone.

POLITIAN.

This weakness grows upon me. I am faint,
 And much I fear me ill—it will not do
 To die ere I have lived!—Stay, stay thy hand,
 O Azrael, yet awhile!—Prince of the Powers
 Of Darkness and the Tomb, O pity me! 410
 O pity me! let me not perish now,
 In the budding of my Paradisal Hope!
 Give me to live yet—yet a little while:
 ’Tis I who pray for life—I who so late
 Demanded but to die!—what sayeth the Count?

Enter BALDAZZAR.

BALDAZZAR.

That knowing no cause of quarrel or of feud
Between the Earl Politian and himself,
He doth decline your cartel.

POLITIAN.

What didst thou say?
What answer was it you brought me, good Baldazzar?
With what excessive fragrance the zephyr comes 420
Laden from yonder bowers!—a fairer day,
Or one more worthy Italy, methinks
No mortal eyes have seen!—*what said the Count?*

BALDAZZAR.

That he, Castiglione, not being aware
Of any feud existing, or any cause
Of quarrel between your lordship and himself,
Cannot accept the challenge.

POLITIAN.

It is most true—
All this is very true. When saw you, sir,
When saw you now, Baldazzar, in the frigid
Ungenial Britain which we left so lately, 430
A heaven so calm as this—so utterly free
From the evil taint of clouds?—and he did *say*?

BALDAZZAR.

No more, my lord, than I have told you, sir:
The Count Castiglione will not fight,
Having no cause for quarrel.

POLITIAN.

Now this is true—
All very true. Thou art my friend, Baldazzar,

And I have not forgotten it—thou'l do me
 A piece of service; wilt thou go back and say
 Unto this man, that I, the Earl of Leicester,
 Hold him a villain?—thus much, I prythee, say 440
 Unto the Count—it is exceeding just
 He should have cause for quarrel.

BALDAZZAR.

My lord!—my friend!—

POLITIAN (*aside*).

'Tis he!—he comes himself? (*aloud*.) Thou reasonest well.

I know what thou wouldest say—not send the message—

Well!—I will think of it—I will not send it.

Now prythee, leave me—hither doth come a person
 With whom affairs of a most private nature
 I would adjust.

BALDAZZAR.

I go—to-morrow we meet,
 Do we not?—at the Vatican.

POLITIAN.

At the Vatican.

(*Exit BALDAZZAR.*)

Enter CASTIGLIONE.

CASTIGLIONE.

The Earl of Leicester here!

450

POLITIAN.

I am the Earl of Leicester, and thou seest,
 Dost thou not? that I am here.

CASTIGLIONE.

My lord, some strange,
 Some singular mistake—misunderstanding—

Hath without doubt arisen : thou hast been urged
Thereby, in heat of anger, to address
Some words most unaccountable, in writing,
To me, Castiglione ; the bearer being
Balduzzar, Duke of Surrey. I am aware
Of nothing which might warrant thee in this thing,
Having given thee no offence. Ha !—am I right ?
'Twas a mistake ?—undoubtedly—we all 461
Do err at times.

POLITIAN.

Draw, villain, and prate no more!

CASTIGLIONE.

Ha!—draw?—and villain? have at thee then at once,
Proud Earl! (Draws.)

POLITIAN (*drawing*).

Thus to the expiatory tomb,
Untimely sepulchre, I do devote thee
In the name of Lalage!

CASTIGLIONE (*letting fall his sword and recoiling to the extremity of the stage*).

Of Lalage !

Hold off—thy sacred hand!—avaunt, I say!
Avaunt—I will not fight thee—indeed I dare not.

POLITIAN.

Thou wilt not fight with me didst say, Sir Count?
Shall I be baffled thus?—now this is well; 470
Didst say thou *darest* not? Ha!

CASTIGLIONE.

I dare not—dare not—

Hold off thy hand—with that beloved name
So fresh upon thy lips I will not fight thee—
I cannot—dare not.

POLITIAN.

Now by my halidom
I do believe thee!—coward, I do believe thee!

CASTIGLIONE.

Ha!—coward!—this may not be!

(Clutches his sword and staggers towards POLITIAN, but his purpose is changed before reaching him, and he falls upon his knee at the feet of the Earl.)

Alas! my lord,
It is—it is—most true. In such a cause
I am the veriest coward. O pity me!

POLITIAN (*greatly softened*).
Alas!—I do—indeed I pity thee.

CASTIGLIONE.

And Lalage ——

POLITIAN.

Scoundrel!—arise and die!

480

CASTIGLIONE.

It needeth not be—thus—thus—O let me die
Thus on my bended knee. It were most fitting
That in this deep humiliation I perish.
For in the fight I will not raise a hand
Against thee, Earl of Leicester. Strike thou home—
(Baring his bosom.)

Here is no let or hindrance to thy weapon—
Strike home. I *will not* fight thee.

POLITIAN.

Now s'Death and Hell!
Am I not—am I not sorely—grievously tempted
To take thee at thy word? But mark me, sir,
Think not to fly me thus. Do thou prepare

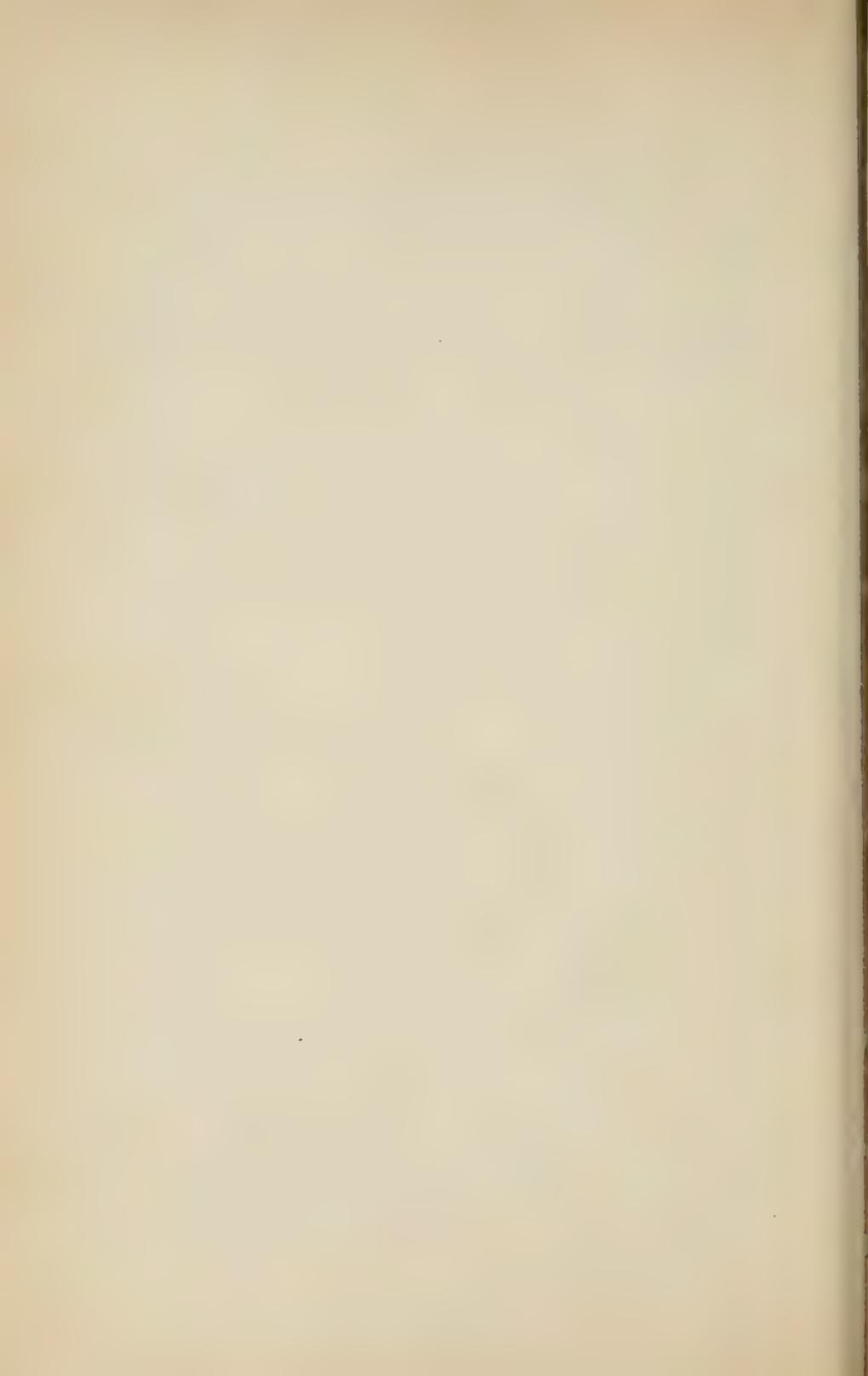
490

For public insult in the streets—before
The eyes of the citizens. I'll follow thee—
Like an avenging spirit I'll follow thee
Even unto death. Before those whom thou lovest—
Before all Rome I'll taunt thee, villain,—I'll taunt
thee,

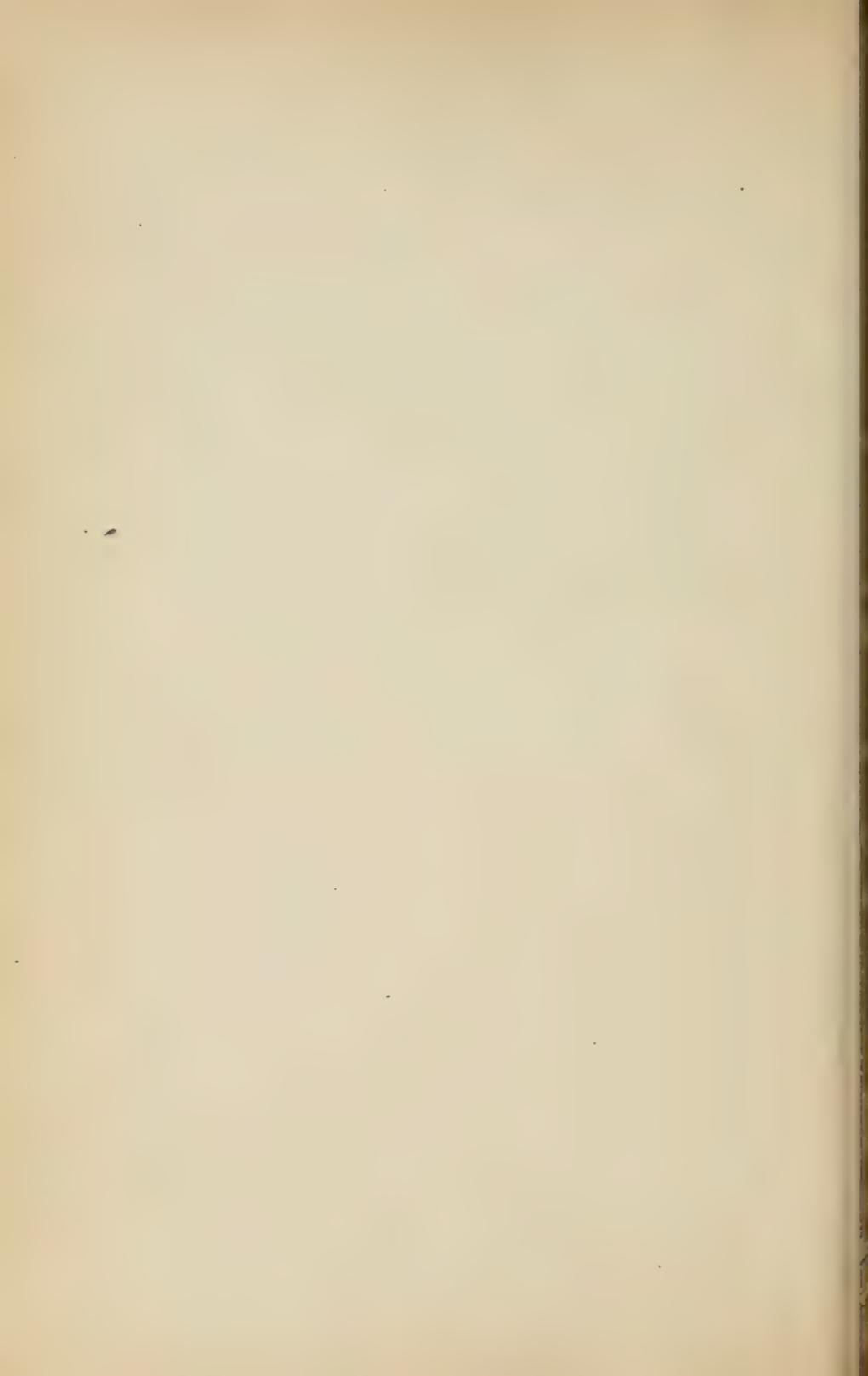
Dost hear? with *cowardice*—thou *wilt not* fight me?
Thou liest! thou *shalt!* (Exit.

CASTIGLIONE.

Now this indeed is just!
Most righteous, and most just, avenging Heaven!



POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH



POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

[Private reasons—some of which have reference to the sin of plagiarism, and others to the date of Tennyson's first poems—have induced me, after some hesitation, to re-publish these, the crude compositions of my earliest boyhood. They are printed *verbatim*—without alteration from the original edition—the date of which is too remote to be judiciously acknowledged.—E. A. P.]

SONNET—TO SCIENCE

SCIENCE! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
 Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
 Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
 Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
 How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,
 Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
 To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
 Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
 Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
 And driven the Hamadryad from the wood 10
 To seek a shelter in some happier star?
 Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
 The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
 The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

AL AARAAF

PART I

O ! nothing earthly save the ray
 (Thrown back from flowers) of Beauty's eye,
 As in those gardens where the day
 Springs from the gems of Circassy—
 O ! nothing earthly save the thrill
 Of melody in woodland rill—
 Or (music of the passion-hearted)
 Joy's voice so peacefully departed
 That like the murmur in the shell,
 Its echo dwelleth and will dwell—
 Oh, nothing of the dross of ours—
 Yet all the beauty—all the flowers
 That list our Love, and deck our bowers—
 Adorn yon world afar, afar—
 The wandering star.

10

'Twas a sweet time for Nesace—for there
 Her world lay lolling on the golden air,
 Near four bright suns—a temporary rest—
 An oasis in desert of the blest.

Away—away—'mid seas of rays that roll 20
 Empyrean splendour o'er th' unchained soul—
 The soul that scarce (the billows are so dense)
 Can struggle to its destin'd eminence,—
 To distant spheres, from time to time, she rode
 And late to ours, the favour'd one of God—

But, now, the ruler of an anchor'd realm,
 She throws aside the sceptre—leaves the helm,
 And, amid incense and high spiritual hymns,
 Laves in quadruple light her angel limbs.

Now happiest, loveliest in yon lovely Earth, 30
 Whence sprang the ‘Idea of Beauty’ into birth,
 (Falling in wreaths thro’ many a startled star,
 Like woman’s hair ’mid pearls, until, afar,
 It lit on hills Achaian, and there dwelt)
 She looked into Infinity—and knelt.
 Rich clouds, for canopies, about her curled—
 Fit emblems of the model of her world—
 Seen but in beauty—not impeding sight
 Of other beauty glittering thro’ the light—
 A wreath that twined each starry form around, 40
 And all the opal’d air in colour bound.

All hurriedly she knelt upon a bed
 Of flowers: of lilies such as rear’d the head
 On the fair Capo Deucato, and sprang
 So eagerly around about to hang
 Upon the flying footsteps of—deep pride—
 Of her who lov’d a mortal—and so died.
 The Sephalica, budding with young bees,
 Upreared its purple stem around her knees:—
 And gemmy flower, of Trebizond misnam’d— 50
 Inmate of highest stars, where erst it sham’d
 All other loveliness:—its honied dew
 (The fabled nectar that the heathen knew)
 Deliriously sweet, was dropp’d from Heaven.
 And fell on gardens of the unforgiven:
 In Trebizond—and on a sunny flower
 So like its own above that, to this hour,

It still remaineth, torturing the bee
 With madness, and unwonted reverie :
 In Heaven, and all its environs, the leaf 60
 And blossom of the fairy plant in grief
 Disconsolate linger—grief that hangs her head,
 Repenting follies that full long have fled,
 Heaving her white breast to the balmy air,
 Like guilty beauty, chasten'd and more fair :
 Nyctanthes too, as sacred as the light
 She fears to perfume, perfuming the night :
 And Clytia, pondering between many a sun,
 While pettish tears adown her petals run :
 And that aspiring flower that sprang on Earth, 70
 And died, ere scarce exalted into birth,
 Bursting its odorous heart in spirit to wing
 Its way to Heaven, from garden of a king :
 And Valisnerian lotus, thither flown
 From struggling with the waters of the Rhone :
 And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante !
 Isola d'oro !— Fior di Levante !
 And the Nelumbo bud that floats for ever
 With Indian Cupid down the holy river—
 Fair flowers, and fairy ! to whose care is given 80
 To bear the Goddess' song, in odours, up to Heaven

‘Spirit ! that dwellest where,
 In the deep sky,
 The terrible and fair,
 In beauty vie !
 Beyond the line of blue—
 The boundary of the star
 Which turneth at the view
 Of thy barrier and thy bar—

Of the barrier overgone 90
 By the comets who were cast
 From their pride and from their throne
 To be drudges till the last—
 To be carriers of fire
 (The red fire of their heart)
 With speed that may not tire
 And with pain that shall not part—
 Who livest—that we know—
 In Eternity—we feel—
 But the shadow of whose brow 100
 What spirit shall reveal?
 Tho' the beings whom thy Nesace,
 Thy messenger hath known
 Have dream'd for thy Infinity
 A model of their own—
 Thy will is done, O God!
 The star hath ridden high
 Thro' many a tempest, but she rode
 Beneath thy burning eye;
 And here, in thought, to thee— 110
 In thought that can alone
 Ascend thy empire and so be
 A partner of thy throne—
 By wingèd Fantasy,
 My embassy is given,
 Till secrecy shall knowledge be
 In the environs of Heaven.'

She ceas'd—and buried then her burning cheek
 Abash'd, amid the lilies there, to seek
 A shelter from the fervour of His eye; 120
 For the stars trembled at the Deity.

She stirr'd not—breath'd not—for a voice was
there

How solemnly pervading the calm air !

A sound of silence on the startled ear

Which dreamy poets name 'the music of the
sphere'.

Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call
'Silence'—which is the merest word of all.

All Nature speaks, and ev'n ideal things

Flap shadowy sounds from visionary wings—

But ah ! not so when, thus, in realms on high 130
The eternal voice of God is passing by,

And the red winds are withering in the sky :—

'What tho' in worlds which sightless cycles run,
Linked to a little system, and one sun—
Where all my love is folly and the crowd
Still think my terrors but the thunder cloud,
The storm, the earthquake, and the ocean-wrath—
(Ah ! will they cross me in my angrier path ?)
What tho' in worlds which own a single sun
The sands of Time grow dimmer as they run, 140
Yet thine is my resplendency, so given
To bear my secrets thro' the upper Heaven
Leave tenantless thy crystal home, and fly,
With all thy train, athwart the moony sky—
Apart—like fire-flies in Sicilian night,
And wing to other worlds another light !
Divulge the secrets of thy embassy
To the proud orbs that twinkle—and so be
To ev'ry heart a barrier and a ban
Lest the stars totter in the guilt of man !'

Up rose the maiden in the yellow night,
 The single-moonèd eve!—on Earth we plight
 Our faith to one love—and one moon adore—
 The birth-place of young Beauty had no more.
 As sprang that yellow star from downy hours
 Up rose the maiden from her shrine of flowers,
 And bent o'er sheeny mountains and dim plain
 Her way, but left not yet her Therasaean reign.

PART II

HIGH on a mountain of enamell'd head—
 Such as the drowsy shepherd on his bed 160
 Of giant pasturage lying at his ease,
 Raising his heavy eyelid, starts and sees
 With many a mutter'd 'hope to be forgiven'
 What time the moon is quadrated in Heaven—
 Of rosy head that, towering far away
 Into the sunlit ether, caught the ray
 Of sunken suns at eve—at noon of night,
 While the moon danc'd with the fair stranger light—
 Uprear'd upon such height arose a pile
 Of gorgeous columns on th' unburthen'd air, 170
 Flashing from Parian marble that twin smile
 Far down upon the wave that sparkled there,
 And nursed the young mountain in its lair.
 Of molten stars their pavement, such as fall
 Thro' the ebon air, besilvering the pall
 Of their own dissolution, while they die—
 Adorning then the dwellings of the sky.
 A dome, by linkèd light from Heaven let down,
 Sat gently on these columns as a crown—

A window of one circular diamond, there, 180
 Look'd out above into the purple air,
 And rays from God shot down that meteor chain
 And hallow'd all the beauty twice again,
 Save when, between th' Empyrean and that ring,
 Some eager spirit flapp'd his dusky wing.
 But on the pillars Seraph eyes have seen
 The dimness of this world: that greyish green
 That Nature loves the best for Beauty's grave
 Lurk'd in each cornice, round each architrave—
 And every sculptur'd cherub thereabout 190
 That from his marble dwelling peerèd out,
 Seem'd earthly in the shadow of his niche—
 Achaian statues in a world so rich?
 Friezes from Tadmor and Persepolis—
 From Balbec, and the stilly, clear abyss
 Of beautiful Gomorrah! O, the wave
 Is now upon thee—but too late to save!

Sound loves to revel in a summer night:
 Witness the murmur of the grey twilight
 That stole upon the ear, in Eyraco,
 Of many a wild star-gazer long ago—
 That stealthèd ever on the ear of him
 Who, musing, gazeth on the distance dim,
 And sees the darkness coming as a cloud—
 Is not its form—its voice—most palpable and loud?

But what is this?—it cometh, and it brings
 A music with it—'tis the rush of wings—
 A pause—and then a sweeping, falling strain
 And Nesace is in her halls again.
 From the wild energy of wanton haste 210

Her cheeks were flushing, and her lips apart;
 And zone that clung around her gentle waist
 Had burst beneath the heaving of her heart.
 Within the centre of that hall to breathe,
 She paused and panted, Zanthe ! all beneath,
 The fairy light that kiss'd her golden hair
 And long'd to rest, yet could but sparkle there.

Young flowers were whispering in melody
 To happy flowers that night—and tree to tree ;
 Fountains were gushing music as they fell 220
 In many a star-lit grove, or moon-lit dell ;
 Yet silence came upon material things—
 Fair flowers, bright waterfalls and angel wings—
 And sound alone that from the spirit sprang
 Bore burthen to the charm the maiden sang :

‘ ’Neath the blue-bell or streamer—

 Or tufted wild spray
 That keeps, from the dreamer,

 The moonbeam away—
 Bright beings ! that ponder, 230

 With half closing eyes,
 On the stars which your wonder

 Hath drawn from the skies,
 Till they glance thro’ the shade, and

 Come down to your brow
 Like——eyes of the maiden

 Who calls on you now—
 Arise ! from your dreaming

 In violet bowers,
 To duty beseeming

 These star-litten hours—

And shake from your tresses
 Eneumber'd with dew
 The breath of those kisses
 That cumber them too—
 (O ! how, without you, Love !
 Could angels be blest ?)
 Those kisses of true Love
 That lull'd ye to rest !
 Up !—shake from your wing 250
 Each hindering thing :
 The dew of the night—
 It would weigh down your flight ;
 And true love caresses—
 O, leave them apart !
 They are light on the tresses,
 But lead on the heart.

Ligeia ! Ligeia ! 260
 My beautiful one !
 Whose harshest idea
 Will to melody run,
 O ! is it thy will
 On the breezes to toss ?
 Or, capriciously still,
 Like the lone Albatross,
 Incumbent on night
 (As she on the air)
 To keep watch with delight
 On the harmony there ?

Ligeia ! wherever 270
 Thy image may be,
 No magic shall sever
 Thy music from thee.

Thou hast bound many eyes
 In a dreamy sleep—
 But the strains still arise
 Which *thy* vigilance keep—
 The sound of the rain,
 Which leaps down to the flower—
 And dances again

280

In the rhythm of the shower—
 The murmur that springs
 From the growing of grass
 Are the music of things—
 But are modell'd, alas!—
 Away, then, my dearest,
 Oh! hie thee away
 To the springs that lie clearest

Beneath the moon-ray—
 To lone lake that smiles,
 In its dream of deep rest,
 At the many star-isles
 That enjewel its breast—
 Where wild flowers, creeping,
 Have mingled their shade,
 On its margin is sleeping
 Full many a maid—

Some have left the cool glade, and
 Have slept with the bee—
 Arouse them, my maiden,

290

On moorland and lea—
 Go! breathe on their slumber,
 All softly in ear,
 Thy musical number
 They slumbered to hear—
 For what can awaken

An angel so soon,
 Whose sleep hath been taken
 Beneath the cold moon,
 As the spell which no slumber
 Of witchery may test,
 The rhythmical number
 Which lull'd him to rest?'

310

Spirits in wing, and angels to the view,
 A thousand seraphs burst th' Empyrean thro',
 Young dreams still hovering on their drowsy flight—
 Seraphs in all but 'Knowledge', the keen light
 That fell, refracted, thro' thy bounds, afar,
 O Death! from eye of God upon that star:
 Sweet was that error—sweeter still that death— 320
 Sweet was that error—even with *us* the breath
 Of Science dims the mirror of our joy—
 To them 'twere the Simoom, and would destroy—
 For what (to them) availeth it to know
 That Truth is Falsehood—or that Bliss is Woe?
 Sweet was their death—with them to die was rife
 With the last ecstasy of satiate life—
 Beyond that death no immortality—
 But sleep that pondereth and is not 'to be'—
 And there—oh! may my weary spirit dwell— 330
 Apart from Heaven's Eternity—and yet how far
 from Hell!
 What guilty spirit, in what shrubbery dim,
 Heard not the stirring summons of that hymn?
 But two: they fell: for Heaven no grace imparts
 To those who hear not for their beating hearts.
 A maiden-angel and her seraph-lover—
 O! where (and ye may seek the wide skies over)

Was Love, the blind, near sober Duty known ?
 Unguided Love hath fallen—'mid 'tears of perfect
 moan'.

He was a goodly spirit—he who fell : 340
 A wanderer by moss-y-mantled well—
 A gazer on the lights that shine above—
 A dreamer in the moonbeam by his love :
 What wonder ? for each star is eye-like there,
 And looks so sweetly down on Beauty's hair—
 And they, and ev'ry mossy spring were holy
 To his love-haunted heart and melancholy.
 The night had found (to him a night of woe)
 Upon a mountain crag, young Angelo—
 Beetling it bends athwart the solemn sky, 350
 And scowls on starry worlds that down beneath it lie.
 Here sat he with his love—his dark eye bent
 With eagle gaze along the firmament :
 Now turn'd it upon her—but ever then
 It trembled to the orb of EARTH again.

' Ianthe, dearest, see—how dim that ray !
 How lovely 'tis to look so far away !
 She seem'd not thus upon that autumn eve
 I left her gorgeous halls—nor mourn'd to leave.
 That eve—that eve—I should remember well— 360
 The sun-ray dropp'd in Lemnos, with a spell
 On th' arabesque carving of a gilded hall
 Wherein I sate, and on the draped wall—
 And on my eyelids—O the heavy light !
 How drowsily it weigh'd them into night !
 On flowers, before, and mist, and love they ran
 With Persian Saadi in his Gulistan :

But O that light!—I slumber'd—Death, the while,
 Stole o'er my senses in that lovely isle
 So softly that no single silken hair 370
 Awoke that slept—or knew that he was there.

'The last spot of Earth's orb I trod upon
 Was a proud temple call'd the Parthenon;
 More beauty clung around her column'd wall
 Than ev'n thy glowing bosom beats withal,
 And when old Time my wing did disenthral
 Thence sprang I—as the eagle from his tower,
 And years I left behind me in an hour.
 What time upon her airy bounds I hung,
 One half the garden of her globe was flung 380
 Unrolling as a chart unto my view—

Tenantless cities of the desert too!
 Ianthe, beauty crowded on me then,
 And half I wish'd to be again of men.'

'My Angelo! and why of them to be?
 A brighter dwelling-place is here for thee—
 And greener fields than in yon world above,
 And woman's loveliness—and passionate love.'

'But, list, Ianthe! when the air so soft
 Fail'd, as my pennon'd spirit leapt aloft, 390
 Perhaps my brain grew dizzy—but the world
 I left so late was into chaos hurl'd—
 Sprang from her station, on the winds apart,
 And roll'd, a flame, the fiery Heaven athwart.
 Methought, my sweet one, then I ceased to soar
 And fell—not swiftly as I rose before,
 But with a downward, tremulous motion thro'
 Light, brazen rays, this golden star unto!

Nor long the measure of my falling hours,
 For nearest of all stars was thine to ours— 400
 Dread star! that came, amid a night of mirth,
 A red Daedalion on the timid Earth.'

'We came—and to thy Earth—but not to us
 Be given our lady's bidding to discuss:
 We came, my love; around, above, below,
 Gay fire-fly of the night we come and go,
 Nor ask a reason save the angel-nod
She grants to us, as granted by her God—
 But, Angelo, than thine grey Time unfurl'd
 Never his fairy wing o'er fairier world! 410
 Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes
 Alone could see the phantom in the skies,
 When first Al Aaraaf knew her course to be
 Headlong thitherward o'er the starry sea—
 But when its glory swell'd upon the sky,
 As glowing Beauty's bust beneath man's eye,
 We paused before the heritage of men,
 And thy star trembled—as doth Beauty then!'

Thus, in discourse, the lovers whiled away
 The night that waned and waned and brought no
 day. 420
 They fell: for Heaven to them no hope imparts
 Who hear not for the beating of their hearts.

NOTES BY POE TO AL AARAAF

PART I

Title] *Al Aaraaf.* A star was discovered by Tycho Brahe which appeared suddenly in the heavens—attained, in a few days, a brilliancy surpassing that of Jupiter—then as suddenly disappeared, and has never been seen since.

I. 44. *On the fair Cipo Deucato.* On Santa Maura—*olim Deucadia.*

I. 47. *Of her who lov'd a mortal—and so died.* Sappho.

I. 50. *And gemmy flower, of Trebizond misnamed.* This flower is much noticed by Lewenhoeck and Tournefort. The bee, feeding upon its blossom, becomes intoxicated.

I. 68. *And Clytia, pondering between many a sun.* Clytia—the Chrysanthemum Peruvianum, or, to employ a better known term, the turnsol—which turns continually towards the sun, covers itself, like Peru, the country from which it comes, with dewy clouds which cool and refresh its flowers during the most violent heat of the day.—B. DE ST. PIERRE.

I. 70. *And that aspiring flower that sprang on Earth.* There is cultivated in the king's garden at Paris, a species of serpentine aloes without prickles, whose large and beautiful flower exhales a strong odour of the vanilla, during the time of its expansion, which is very short. It does not blow till towards the month of July—you then perceive it gradually open its petals—expand them—fade and die.—ST. PIERRE.

I. 74. *And Valisnerian lotus, thither flown.* There is found, in the Rhone, a beautiful lily of the Valisnerian kind. Its stem will stretch to the length of three or four feet—thus preserving its head above water in the swellings of the river.

I. 76. *And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante.* The Hyacinth.

II. 78-9. *And the Nelumbo bud that floats for ever
With Indian Cupid down the holy river—*

It is a fiction of the Indians, that Cupid was first seen floating in one of these down the river Ganges—and that he still loves the cradle of his childhood.

I. 81. *To bear the Goddess' song, in odours, up to Heaven.* And golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.—REV. ST. JOHN.

l. 105. *A model of their own.* The Humanitarians held that God was to be understood as having really a human form.—*Vide CLARKE's Sermons*, vol. i, p. 26, fol. edit.

The drift of Milton's argument leads him to employ language which would appear, at first sight, to verge upon their doctrine; but it would be seen immediately, that he guards himself against the charge of having adopted one of the most ignorant errors of the dark ages of the church.—Dr. SUMNER'S *Notes on Milton's Christian Doctrine*.

This opinion, in spite of many testimonies to the contrary, could never have been very general. Andeus, a Syrian of Mesopotamia, was condemned for the opinion, as heretical. He lived in the beginning of the fourth century. His disciples were called Anthropomorphites.—*Vide DU PIN*.

Among Milton's minor poems are these lines :

'Dicite sacrorum presides nemorum Deae, &c.
Quis ille primus cuius ex imagine
Natura solers finxit humanum genus?
Eternus, incorruptus, aequaevus polo,
Unusque et universus, exemplar Dei.'

And afterwards—

'Non cui profundum Caecitas lumen dedit
Dircaeus augur vidit hunc alto sinu,' &c.

l. 114. *By wingèd Fantasy.*

Fantasy. Seltsamen Tochter Jovis
Seinem Schosskinde,
Der Phantasie.—GOETHE.

l. 133. *What tho' in worlds which sightless cycles run.* Sightless—too small to be seen.—LEGGE.

l. 145. *Apart—like fire-flies in Sicilian night.* I have often noticed a peculiar movement of the fire-flies;—they will collect in a body, and fly off, from a common centre, into innumerable radii.

l. 158. *Her way, but left not yet her Therasaea reign.* Therasaea, or Therasea, the island mentioned by Seneca, which, in a moment, arose from the sea to the eyes of astonished mariners.

PART II

ll. 174-5. *Of molten stars their pavement, such as fall
Thro' the ebon air.*

Some star, which from the ruin'd roof
Of shaked Olympus, by mischance, did fall.—MILTON.

l. 194. *Friezes from Tadmor and Persepolis.* Voltaire, in speaking of Persepolis, says, ‘Je connois bien l’admiration qu’inspirent ces ruines—mais un palais érigé au pied d’une chaîne de rochers stériles—peut-il être un chef-d’œuvre des arts?’

l. 196. *Of beautiful Gomorrah! O, the wave.* Ula Deguisi is the Turkish appellation; but, on its own shores, it is called Bahar Loth, or Almotanah. There were undoubtedly more than two cities engulfed in the ‘Dead Sea’. In the valley of Siddim were five—Adrah, Zeboin, Zoar, Sodom and Gomorrah. Stephen of Byzantium mentions eight, and Strabo thirteen, (engulfed)—but the last is out of all reason.

It is said [Tacitus, Strabo, Josephus, Daniel of St. Saba, Nau, Maundrell, Troilo, D’Arvieux] that after an excessive drought, the vestiges of columns, walls, &c., are seen above the surface. At any season, such remains may be discovered by looking down into the transparent lake, and at such distances as would argue the existence of many settlements in the space now usurped by the ‘Asphaltites’.

l. 200. *That stole upon the ear, in Eyraco.* Eyraco—Chaldea.

l. 205. *Is not its form—its voice—most palpable and loud?* I have often thought I could distinctly hear the sound of the darkness as it stole over the horizon.

l. 218. *Young flowers were whispering in melody.* Fairies use flowers for their charactery.—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

l. 229. *The moonbeam away.* In Scripture is this passage—‘The sun shall not harm thee by day, nor the moon by night.’ It is perhaps not generally known that the moon, in Egypt, has the effect of producing blindness to those who sleep with the face exposed to its rays, to which circumstance the passage evidently alludes.

l. 265. *Like the lone Albatross.* The albatross is said to sleep on the wing.

l. 282. *The murmur that sings.* I met with this idea in an old English tale, which I am now unable to obtain, and quote from memory:—‘The verie essence and, as it were, springe-heade and origine of all musiche is the verie plesaunte sounde which the trees of the forest do make when they growe.’

I. 299. *Have slept with the bee.* The wild bee will not sleep in the shade if there be moonlight.

The rhyme in this verse, as in one about sixty lines before, has an appearance of affectation. It is, however, imitated from Sir W. Scott, or rather from Claude Halero—in whose mouth I admired its effect :

‘Oh ! were there an island
Though ever so wild,
Where woman might smile, and
No man be beguiled,’ &c.

I. 331. *Apart from Heaven's Eternity—and yet how far from Hell!* With the Arabians there is a medium between Heaven and Hell, where men suffer no punishment, but yet do not attain that tranquil and even happiness which they suppose to be characteristic of heavenly enjoyment.

Un no rompido sueño—
Un dia puro—allegre—libre—
Quiero :—
Libre de amor—de zelo—
De odio—de esperanza—de rezelo.—

LUIS PONCE DE LEÓN.

Sorrow is not excluded from ‘Al Aaraaf’, but it is that sorrow which the living love to cherish for the dead, and which, in some minds, resembles the delirium of opium. The passionate excitement of Love and the buoyancy of spirit attendant upon intoxication are its less holy pleasures—the price of which, to those souls who make choice of ‘Al Aaraaf’ as their residence after life, is final death and annihilation.

I. 339. *Unguided Love hath fallen—mid ‘tears of perfect moan’.*

There be tears of perfect moan
Wept for thee in Helicon.—MILTON.

I. 373. *Was a proud temple call'd the Parthenon.* It was entire in 1687—the most elevated spot in Athens.

I. 375. *Than ev'n thy glowing bosom beats withal.*
Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love.—MARLOWE.

I. 390. *Fail'd, as my pennon'd spirit leapt aloft.* Pennon—for
pinion.—MILTON.

TAMERLANE

ADVERTISEMENT

[This Poem was printed for publication in Boston, in the year 1827, but suppressed through circumstances of a private nature.—Note to ‘1829’ edition.]

KIND solace in a dying hour !

Such, father, is not (now) my theme—
I will not madly deem that power

Of Earth may shrive me of the sin
Unearthly pride hath revell’d in—

I have no time to dote or dream :
You call it hope—that fire of fire !
It is but agony of desire :
If I *can* hope—Oh God ! I can—
Its fount is holier—more divine—
I would not call thee fool, old man,
But such is not a gift of thine.

10

Know thou the secret of a spirit
Bow’d from its wild pride into shame.
O yearning heart ! I did inherit
Thy withering portion with the fame,
The searing glory which hath shone
Amid the jewels of my throne,
Halo of Hell ! and with a pain
Not Hell shall make me fear again—
O craving heart, for the lost flowers
And sunshine of my summer hours !
The undying voice of that dead time,
With its interminable chime,
Rings, in the spirit of a spell,
Upon thy emptiness—a knell.

20

I have not always been as now :
 The fever'd diadem on my brow
 I claim'd and won usurpingly—
 Hath not the same fierce heirdom given 30
 Rome to the Caesar—this to me ?

The heritage of a kingly mind,
 And a proud spirit which hath striven
 Triumphantly with human kind.

On mountain soil I first drew life :
 The mists of the Taglay have shed
 Nightly their dews upon my head,
 And, I believe, the wingèd strife
 And tumult of the headlong air
 Have nestled in my very hair. 40

So late from Heaven—that dew—it fell
 ('Mid dreams of an unholy night)
 Upon me with the touch of Hell,
 While the red flashing of the light
 From clouds that hung, like banners, o'er,
 Appeared to my half-closing eye
 The pageantry of monarchy,
 And the deep trumpet-thunder's roar
 Came hurriedly upon me, telling
 Of human battle, where my voice,
 My own voice, silly child !—was swelling 50
 (O ! how my spirit would rejoice,
 And leap within me at the cry)
 The battle-cry of Victory !

The rain came down upon my head
 Unshelter'd—and the heavy wind
 Rendered me mad and deaf and blind.
 It was but man, I thought, who shed

Laurels upon me : and the rush—
 The torrent of the chilly air
 Gurgled within my ear the crush
 Of empires—with the captive's prayer—
 The hum of suitors—and the tone
 Of flattery 'round a sovereign's throne.

60

My passions, from that hapless hour,
 Usurp'd a tyranny which men
 Have deem'd, since I have reach'd to power,
 My innate nature—be it so :

But father, there liv'd one who, then,
 Then—in my boyhood—when their fire

70

Burn'd with a still intenser glow,
 (For passion must, with youth, expire)

E'en *then* who knew this iron heart
 In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no words—alas !—to tell
 The loveliness of loving well !
 Nor would I now attempt to trace
 The more than beauty of a face
 Whose lineaments, upon my mind,
 Are—shadows on th' unstable wind :
 Thus I remember having dwelt

80

Some page of early lore upon,
 With loitering eye, till I have felt
 The letters—with their meaning—melt
 To fantasies—with none.

O, she was worthy of all love !
 Love—as in infancy was mine—
 'Twas such as angel minds above
 Might envy ; her young heart the shrine

.On which my every hope and thought
Were incense—then a goodly gift,
For they were childish and upright—
Pure—as her young example taught :
Why did I leave it, and, adrift,
Trust to the fire within, for light ?

We grew in age—and love—together,
Roaming the forest, and the wild ;
My breast her shield in wintry weather—
And when the friendly sunshine smil'd
And she would mark the opening skies, 100
I saw no Heaven—but in her eyes.

Young Love's first lesson is—the heart :
For 'mid that sunshine, and those smiles,
When, from our little cares apart,
And laughing at her girlish wiles,
I'd throw me on her throbbing breast,
And pour my spirit out in tears—
There was no need to speak the rest—
No need to quiet any fears
Of her—who ask'd no reason why, 110
But turn'd on me her quiet eye !

Yet *more* than worthy of the love
My spirit struggled with, and strove,
When, on the mountain peak, alone,
Ambition lent it a new tone—
I had no being—but in thee :
The world, and all it did contain
In the earth—the air—the sea—
Its joy—its little lot of pain
That was new pleasure—the ideal, 120
Dim vanities of dreams by night—

And dimmer nothings which were real—
 (Shadows—and a more shadowy light!)
 Parted upon their misty wings,
 And, so, confusedly, became
 Thine image, and—a name—a name!
 Two separate—yet most intimate things.

I was ambitious—have you known
 The passion, father? You have not:
 A cottager, I mark'd a throne 130
 Of half the world as all my own,
 And murmur'd at such lowly lot—
 But, just like any other dream,
 Upon the vapour of the dew
 My own had past, did not the beam
 Of beauty which did while it thro'
 The minute—the hour—the day—oppress
 My mind with double loveliness.

We walk'd together on the crown
 Of a high mountain which look'd down 140
 Afar from its proud natural towers
 Of rock and forest, on the hills—
 The dwindled hills! begirt with bowers,
 And shouting with a thousand rills.

I spoke to her of power and pride,
 But mystically—in such guise
 That she might deem it nought beside
 The moment's converse; in her eyes
 I read, perhaps too carelessly—
 A mingled feeling with my own— 150

The flush on her bright cheek, to me
 Seem'd to become a queenly throne
 Too well that I should let it be
 Light in the wilderness alone.

I wrapp'd myself in grandeur then,
 And donn'd a visionary crown—
 Yet it was not that Fantasy
 Had thrown her mantle over me—
 But that, among the rabble—men,
 Lion ambition is chained down—
 And crouches to a keeper's hand—
 Not so in deserts where the grand—
 The wild—the terrible conspire
 With their own breath to fan his fire.

160

Look 'round thee now on Samarcand !
 Is not she queen of Earth ? her pride
 Above all cities ? in her hand
 Their destinies ? in all beside
 Of glory which the world hath known
 Stands she not nobly and alone ?
 Falling—her veriest stepping-stone
 Shall form the pedestal of a throne—
 And who her sovereign ? Timour—he
 Whom the astonished people saw
 Striding o'er empires haughtily
 A diadem'd outlaw !

170

O, human love ! thou spirit given
 On Earth, of all we hope in Heaven !
 Which fall'st into the soul like rain
 Upon the Siroc-wither'd plain,

180

And, failing in thy power to bless,
 But leav'st the heart a wilderness!
 Idea! which bindest life around
 With music of so strange a sound,
 And beauty of so wild a birth—
 Farewell! for I have won the Earth.

When Hope, the eagle that tower'd, could see
 No cliff beyond him in the sky,
 His pinions were bent droopingly—
 And homeward turn'd his soften'd eye. 190

'Twas sunset: when the sun will part
 There comes a sullenness of heart
 To him who still would look upon
 The glory of the summer sun.
 That soul will hate the ev'ning mist,
 So often lovely, and will list
 To the sound of the coming darkness (known
 To those whose spirits hearken) as one
 Who, in a dream of night, *would fly*
 But *cannot* from a danger nigh. 200

What tho' the moon—the white moon
 Shed all the splendour of her noon,
Her smile is chilly, and *her* beam,
 In that time of dreariness, will seem
 (So like you gather in your breath)
 A portrait taken after death.
 And boyhood is a summer sun
 Whose waning is the dreariest one—
 For all we live to know is known,
 And all we seek to keep hath flown—
 Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall
 With the noon-day beauty—which is all. 210

I reach'd my home—my home no more—
 For all had flown who made it so.
 I pass'd from out its mossy door,
 And, tho' my tread was soft and low,
 A voice came from the threshold stone
 Of one whom I had earlier known—
 O, I defy thee, Hell, to show
 On beds of fire that burn below,
 A humbler heart—a deeper woe.

220

Father, I firmly do believe—
 I *know*—for Death, who comes for me
 From regions of the blest afar,
 Where there is nothing to deceive,
 Hath left his iron gate ajar,
 And rays of truth you cannot see
 Are flashing thro' Eternity—
 I do believe that Eblis hath
 A snare in every human path—
 Else how, when in the holy grove
 I wandered of the idol, Love,
 Who daily scents his snowy wings
 With incense of burnt offerings
 From the most unpolluted things,
 Whose pleasant bowers are yet so riven
 Above with trellis'd rays from Heaven,
 No mote may shun—no tiniest fly—
 The lightning of his eagle eye—
 How was it that Ambition crept,

230

Unseen, amid the revels there,
 Till growing bold, he laughed and leapt
 In the tangles of Love's very hair?

240

A DREAM

IN visions of the dark night
 I have dreamed of joy departed—
 But a waking dream of life and light
 Hath left me broken-hearted.

Ah ! what is not a dream by day
 To him whose eyes are cast
 On things around him with a ray
 Turned back upon the past ?

That holy dream—that holy dream,
 While all the world were chiding,
 Hath cheered me as a lovely beam
 A lonely spirit guiding.

What though that light, thro' storm and night,
 So trembled from afar—
 What could there be more purely bright
 In Truth's day-star ?

ROMANCE

ROMANCE, who loves to nod and sing,
 With drowsy head and folded wing,
 Among the green leaves as they shake
 Far down within some shadowy lake,
 To me a painted paroquet
 Hath been—a most familiar bird—
 Taught me my alphabet to say—
 To lisp my very earliest word
 While in the wild wood I did lie,
 A child—with a most knowing eye.

10

Of late, eternal Condor years
 So shake the very Heaven on high
 With tumult as they thunder by,
 I have no time for idle cares
 Through gazing on the unquiet sky.
 And when an hour with calmer wings
 Its down upon my spirit flings—
 That little time with lyre and rhyme
 To while away—forbidden things !
 My heart would feel to be a crime
 Unless it trembled with the strings.

20

FAIRY-LAND

DIM vales—and shadowy floods—
 And cloudy-looking woods,
 Whose forms we can't discover
 For the tears that drip all over
 Huge moons there wax and wane—
 Again—again—again—
 Every moment of the night—
 Forever changing places—
 And they put out the star-light
 With the breath from their pale faces. 10
 About twelve by the moon-dial,
 One more filmy than the rest
 (A kind which, upon trial,
 They have found to be the best)
 Comes down—still down—and down,
 With its centre on the crown
 Of a mountain's eminence,
 While its wide circumference
 In easy drapery falls
 Over hamlets, over halls, 20
 Wherever they may be—
 O'er the strange woods—o'er the sea—
 Over spirits on the wing—
 Over every drowsy thing—
 And buries them up quite
 In a labyrinth of light—
 And then, how deep!—O, deep!

Is the passion of their sleep.
In the morning they arise,
And their moony covering
Is soaring in the skies,
With the tempests as they toss,
Like——almost anything——
Or a yellow Albatross.
They use that moon no more
For the same end as before——
Videlicet, a tent——
Which I think extravagant :
Its atomies, however,
Into a shower dissever,
Of which those butterflies
Of Earth, who seek the skies,
And so come down again,
(Never-contented things !)
Have brought a specimen
Upon their quivering wings.

30

4C

TO ——

THE bowers whereat, in dreams, I see
 The wantonest singing birds,
Are lips—and all thy melody
 Of lip-begotten words—

Thine eyes, in Heaven of heart enshrined,
 Then desolately fall,
O God! on my funereal mind
 Like starlight on a pall—

Thy heart—*thy* heart!—I wake and sigh,
 And sleep to dream till day
Of the truth that gold can never buy—
 Of the baubles that it may.

10

TO THE RIVER —

FAIR river ! in thy bright, clear flow
 Of crystal, wandering water,
 Thou art an emblem of the glow
 Of beauty—the unhidden heart—
 The playful maziness of art
 In old Alberto's daughter ;

But when within thy wave she looks—
 Which glistens then, and trembles—
 Why, then, the prettiest of brooks
 Her worshipper resembles ; 10
 For in my heart, as in thy stream,
 Her image deeply lies—
 His heart which trembles at the beam
 Of her soul-searching eyes.

THE LAKE—TO —

IN spring of youth it was my lot
 To haunt of the wide world a spot
 The which I could not love the less—
 So lovely was the loneliness
 Of a wild lake, with black rock bound,
 And the tall pines that towered around.

But when the Night had thrown her pall
 Upon that spot, as upon all,
 And the mystic wind went by
 Murmuring in melody—
 Then—ah then I would awake
 To the terror of the lone lake.

Yet that terror was not fright,
 But a tremulous delight—
 A feeling not the jewelled mine
 Could teach or bribe me to define—
 Nor Love—although the Love were thine.

Death was in that poisonous wave,
 And in its gulf a fitting grave
 For him who thence could solace bring
 To his lone imagining—
 Whose solitary soul could make
 An Eden of that dim lake.

SONG

I SAW thee on thy bridal day—

When a burning blush came o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee:

And in thine eye a kindling light
(Whatever it might be)

Was all on Earth my aching sight
Of Loveliness could see.

That blush, perhaps, was maiden shame—

As such it well may pass—
Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame
In the breast of him, alas !

Who saw 'thee on that bridal day,

When that deep blush *would* come o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay ;
The world all love before thee.

TO HELEN

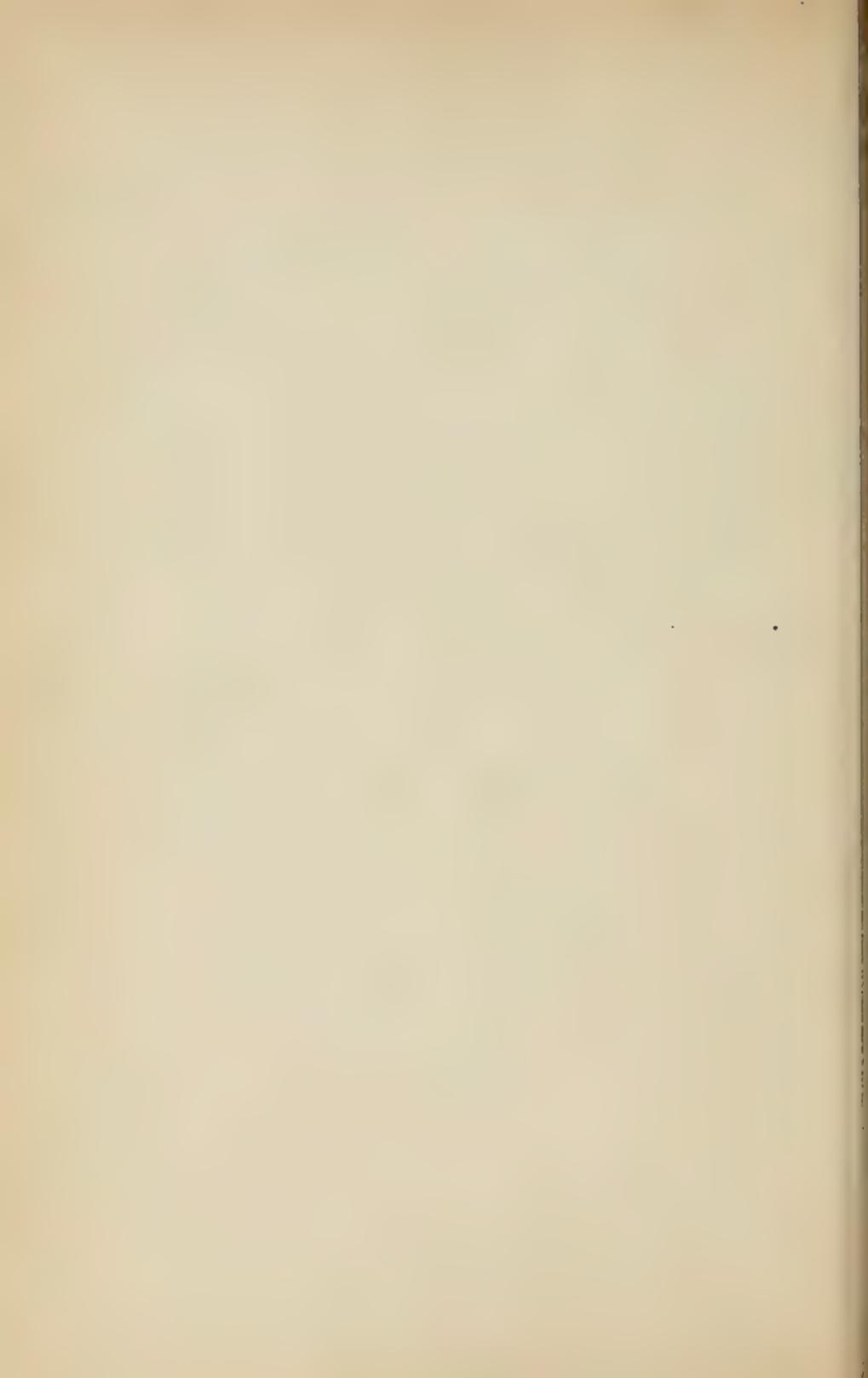
[‘Helen’ was Mrs. Stannard, whose death also inspired *Lenore*.]

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
 Like those Nicean barks of yore,
 That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
 The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
 To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
 Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
 Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
 To the glory that was Greece
 And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo ! in yon brilliant window-niche
 How statue-like I see thee stand,
 The agate lamp within thy hand !
 Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
 Are Holy Land !

FROM WORKS OF THE LATE
EDGAR ALLAN POE
(GRISWOLD, 1850)
AND ‘ALONE’



TO M. L. S——¹

[Mrs. Marie Louise Shew.]

Of all who hail thy presence as the morning—
 Of all to whom thine absence is the night—
 The blotting utterly from out high heaven
 The sacred sun—of all who, weeping, bless thee
 Hourly for hope—for life—ah! above all,
 For the resurrection of deep-buried faith
 In Truth—in Virtue—in Humanity—
 Of all who, on Despair's unhallowed bed
 Lying down to die, have suddenly arisen
 At thy soft-murmured words, 'Let there be light!'
 At the soft-murmured words that were fulfilled ii
 In the seraphic glancing of thine eyes—
 Of all who owe thee most—whose gratitude
 Nearest resembles worship—oh, remember
 The truest—the most fervently devoted,
 And think that these weak lines are written by him—
 By him who, as he pens them, thrills to think
 His spirit is communing with an angel's.

¹ ['The following seems said over a hand clasped in the speaker's two. It is by Edgar A. Poe, and is evidently the pouring out of a very deep feeling of gratitude.'—Note by Editor of *Home Journal*.]

AN ENIGMA

'SELDOM we find,' says Solomon Don Dunce,
 'Half an idea in the profoundest sonnet.
 Through all the flimsy things we see at once
 As easily as through a Naples bonnet—
 Trash of all trash!—how *can* a lady don it?
 Yet heavier far than your Petrarchan stuff—
 Owl-downy nonsense that the faintest puff
 Twirls into trunk-paper the while you con it.'
 And, veritably, Sol is right enough.
 The general tuckermanities are arrant 10
 Bubbles—ephemeral and *so* transparent—
 But *this* is, now—you may depend upon it—
 Stable, opaque, immortal—all by dint
 Of the dear names that lie concealed within 't.

[To find the name, read the first letter in the first line, the second in the second, and so on—**SARAH ANNA LEWIS.**]

A VALENTINE.

For her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes,
 Brightly expressive as the twins of Lœda,
 Shall find her own sweet name, that nestling lies
 Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.
 Search narrowly the lines!—they hold a treasure
 Divine—a talisman—an amulet
 That must be worn *at heart*. Search well the
 measure—
 The words—the syllables! Do not forget
 The trivialest point, or you may lose your labour!
 And yet there is in this no Gordian knot 10
 Which one might not undo without a sabre,
 If one could merely comprehend the plot.
 Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering
 Eyes scintillating soul, there lie *perdus*
 Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing
 Of poets, by poets—as the name is a poet's, too.
 Its letters, although naturally lying
 Like the knight Pinto—Mendez Ferdinando—
 Still form a synonym for Truth.—Cease trying!
 You will not read the riddle, though you do the
 best you *can* do. 20

[To find the name, read the first letter in the first line, the second in the second, and so on—FRANCES SARGENT OSGOOD.]

ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,
 In a kingdom by the sea,
 That a maiden there lived whom you may know
 By the name of ANNABEL LEE ;
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought
 Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
 In this kingdom by the sea ;
 But we loved with a love which was more than love—
 I and my Annabel Lee ; 10
 With a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven
 Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
 My beautiful Annabel Lee ;
 So that her highborn kinsman came
 And bore her away from me,
 To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea. 20

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
 Went envying her and me—
 Yes !—that was the reason (as all men know,
 In this kingdom by the sea)
 That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we—
 Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above, 30
 Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee ;
And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee ;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
 Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
 In the sepulchre there by the sea, 40
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.

THE BELLS

I

HEAR the sledges with the bells—
Silver bells !

What a world of merriment their melody foretells !
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
 In the icy air of night !
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
 With a crystalline delight ;
Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rhyme, 10
To the tintinabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells !

What a world of happiness their harmony foretells !
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight !
From the molten-golden notes, 20
 And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
 On the moon !
Oh, from out the sounding cells,

What a gush of euphony voluminously wells !

How it swells !

How it dwells

On the Future ! how it tells

Of the rapture that impels

30

To the swinging and the ringing

Of the bells, bells, bells,

Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,

Bells, bells, bells—

To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells !

III

Hear the loud alarum bells—

Brazen bells !

What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells !

In the startled ear of night

How they scream out their affright ! 40

Too much horrified to speak,

They can only shriek, shriek,

Out of tune,

In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,

In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic
fire,

Leaping higher, higher, higher,

With a desperate desire,

And a resolute endeavour.

Now—now to sit or never,

By the side of the pale-faced moon. 50

Oh, the bells, bells, bells !

What a tale their terror tells

Of Despair !

How they clang, and clash, and roar

What a horror they outpour

On the bosom of the palpitating air !
 Yet the ear it fully knows,
 By the twanging,
 And the clangling,
 How the danger ebbs and flows : 60
 Yet the ear distinctly tells,
 In the jangling,
 And the wrangling,
 How the danger sinks and swells,
 By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
 Of the bells—
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—
 In the clamour and the clangour of the bells !

IV

Hear the tolling of the bells— 70
 Iron bells !
 What a world of solemn thought their monody
 compels !
 In the silence of the night,
 How we shiver with affright
 At the melancholy menace of their tone !
 For every sound that floats
 From the rust within their throats
 Is a groan.
 And the people—ah, the people—
 They that dwell up in the steeple, 80
 All alone,
 And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,
 In that muffled monotone,
 Feel a glory in so rolling
 On the human heart a stone—

They are neither man nor woman—
They are neither brute nor human—

They are Ghouls :

And their king it is who tolls ;

And he rolls, rolls, rolls,

90

Rolls

A paean from the bells !

And his merry bosom swells

With the paean of the bells !

And he dances, and he yells ;

Keeping time, time, time,

In a sort of Runic rhyme,

To the paean of the bells—

Of the bells :

Keeping time, time, time,

100

In a sort of Runic rhyme,

To the throbbing of the bells—

Of the bells, bells, bells—

To the sobbing of the bells ;

Keeping time, time, time,

As he knells, knells, knells,

In a happy Runic rhyme,

To the rolling of the bells—

Of the bells, bells, bells :

To the tolling of the bells,

110

Of the bells, bells, bells, bells—

Bells, bells, bells—

To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

ELDORADO

GAILY bedight,
 A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
 Had journeyed long,
 Singing a song,
 In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
 This knight so bold—
 And o'er his heart a shadow
 Fell as he found
 No spot of ground
 That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
 He met a pilgrim shadow—
 ‘Shadow,’ said he,
 ‘Where can it be—
 This land of Eldorado?’

‘Over the Mountains
 Of the Moon,
 Down the Valley of the Shadow,
 Ride, boldly ride,’
 The shade replied—
 ‘If you seek for Eldorado !’

ULALUME

THE skies they were ashen and sober;
 The leaves they were crisped and sere—
 The leaves they were withering and sere;
 It was night in the lonesome October
 Of my most immemorial year;
 It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
 In the misty mid region of Weir—
 It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
 In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic, 10
 Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
 Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
 These were days when my heart was volcanic
 As the scoriae rivers that roll—
 As the lavas that restlessly roll
 Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
 In the ultimate climes of the pole—
 That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
 In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober, 20
 But our thoughts they were palsied and sere—
 Our memories were treacherous and sere—
 For we knew not the month was October,
 And we marked not the night of the year—
 (Ah, night of all nights in the year!)

We noted not the dim lake of Auber—
 (Though once we had journeyed down here),
 Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
 Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was seneseent, 30
 And star-dials pointed to morn—
 As the star-dials hinted of morn—
 At the end of our path a liquecent
 And nebulous lustre was born,
 Out of which a miraculous crescent
 Arose with a duplicate horn—
 Astarte's bediamonded crescent
 Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—‘She is warmer than Dian :
 She rolls through an ether of sighs— 40
 She revels in a region of sighs :
 She has seen that the tears are not dry on
 These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
 And has come past the stars of the Lion,
 To point us the path to the skies—
 To the Lethean peace of the skies—
 Come up, in despite of the Lion,
 To shine on us with her bright eye—
 Come up through the lair of the Lion,
 With love in her luminous eyes.’ 50

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
 Said—‘ Sadly this star I mistrust—
 Her pallor I strangely mistrust :—
 Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger!
 Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must.’

In terror she spoke, letting sink her
 Wings until they trailed in the dust—
 In agony sobbed, letting sink her
 Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
 Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust. 60

I replied—‘This is nothing but dreaming :
 Let us on by this tremulous light !
 Let us bathe in this crystalline light !
 Its Sybilic splendour is beaming
 With Hope and in Beauty to-night :—
 See !—it flickers up the sky through the night !
 Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
 And be sure it will lead us aright—
 We safely may trust to a gleaming
 That cannot but guide us aright, 70
 Since it flickers up to Heaven through the
 night.’

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
 And tempted her out of her gloom—
 And conquered her scruples and gloom ;
 And we passed to the end of the vista,
 But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
 By the door of a legended tomb ;
 And I said—‘What is written, sweet sister,
 On the door of this legended tomb ?’
 She replied—‘Ulalume—Ulalume— 80
 ’Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume !’

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
 As the leaves that were crisped and sere—
 As the leaves that were withering and sere
 And I cried—‘It was surely October

On *this* very night of last year
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here—
That I brought a dread burden down here—
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here? 90

Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
This misty mid region of Weir—
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.'

TO HELEN

[Helen was Mrs. Whitman.]

I SAW thee once—once only—years ago :
 I must not say *how* many—but *not* many.
 It was a July midnight ; and from out
 A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul, soaring,
 Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven,
 There fell a silvery-silken veil of light,
 With quietude, and sultriness, and slumber,
 Upon the upturned faces of a thousand
 Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,
 Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tiptoe— 15
 Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
 That gave out, in return for the love-light,
 Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death—
 Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
 That smiled and died in this parterre, enchanted
 By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank
 I saw thee half reclining ; while the moon
 Fell on the upturn'd faces of the roses,
 And on thine own, upturn'd—alas, in sorrow ! 20

Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight—
 Was it not Fate, (whose name is also Sorrow,)
 That bade me pause before that garden-gate,
 To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses ?

No footstep stirred : the hated world all slept,
 Save only thee and me. (Oh, Heaven !—oh, God !
 How my heart beats in coupling those two words !)
 Save only thee and me. I paused—I looked—
 And in an instant all things disappeared.
 (Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted !) 30

The pearly lustre of the moon went out :
 The mossy banks and the meandering paths,
 The happy flowers and the repining trees,
 Were seen no more : the very roses' odours
 Died in the arms of the adoring airs.
 All—all expired save thee—save less than thou :
 Save only the divine light in thine eyes—
 Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes.
 I saw but them—they were the world to me !
 I saw but them—saw only them for hours, 40
 Saw only them until the moon went down.
 What wild heart-histories seemed to lie enwritten
 Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres !
 How dark a woe, yet how sublime a hope !
 How silently serene a sea of pride !
 How daring an ambition ; yet how deep—
 How fathomless a capacity for love !

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,
 Into a western couch of thunder-cloud ;
 And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees 50
 Didst glide away. *Only thine eyes remained* ;
 They would not go—they never yet have gone ;
 Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,
 They have not left me (as my hopes have) since ;
 They follow me—they lead me through the years.

They are my ministers—yet I their slave.
Their office is to illumine and enkindle—
My duty, *to be saved* by their bright light,
And purified in their electric fire,
And sanctified in their elysian fire. 60
They fill my soul with Beauty (which is Hope),
And are far up in Heaven—the stars I kneel to
In the sad, silent watches of my night;
While even in the meridian glare of day
I see them still—two sweetly scintillant
Venuses, unextinguished by the sun !

TO — — —

[Mrs. Marie Louise Shew.]

NOT long ago, the writer of these lines,
 In the mad pride of intellectuality,
 Maintained 'the power of words'—denied that ever
 A thought arose within the human brain
 Beyond the utterance of the human tongue:
 And now, as if in mockery of that boast,
 Two words—two foreign soft dissyllables—
 Italian tones, made only to be murmured
 By angels dreaming in the moonlit 'dew
 That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill', 10
 Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart,
 Unthought-like thoughts that are the souls of thought,
 Richer, far wilder, far diviner visions
 Than even seraph harper, Israfel,
 (Who has 'the sweetest voice of all God's creatures,')
 Could hope to utter. And I ! my spells are broken.
 The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand.
 With thy dear name as text, though bidden by thee,
 I cannot write—I cannot speak or think—
 Alas, I cannot feel; for 'tis not feeling, 20
 This standing motionless upon the golden
 Threshold of the wide-open gate of dreams.
 Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,
 And thrilling as I see, upon the right,
 Upon the left, and all the way along,
 Amid empurpled vapours, far away
 To where the prospect terminates—*thee only.*

FOR ANNIE

THANK Heaven ! the crisis—
 The danger is past,
 And the lingering illness
 Is over at last—
 And the fever called ‘Living’
 Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know
 I am shorn of my strength,
 And no muscle I move
 As I lie at full length—
 But no matter !—I feel
 I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly,
 Now, in my bed,
 That any beholder
 Might fancy me dead—
 Might start at beholding me,
 Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
 The sighing and sobbing,
 Are quieted now,
 With that horrible throbbing
 At heart :—ah, that horrible,
 Horrible throbbing !

10

20

The sickness—the nausea—
 The pitiless pain—
 Have ceased, with the fever
 That maddened my brain—
 With the fever called ‘Living’
 That burned in my brain.

30

And oh ! of all tortures
That torture the worst
 Has abated—the terrible
 Torture of thirst
 For the naphthaline river
 Of Passion accurst :—
 I have drunk of a water
 That quenches all thirst :—

Of a water that flows,
 With a lullaby sound,
 From a spring but a very few
 Feet under ground—
 From a cavern not very far
 Down under ground.

40

And ah ! let it never
 Be foolishly said
 That my room it is gloomy
 And narrow my bed ;
 For man never slept
 In a different bed—
 And, *to sleep*, you must slumber
 In just such a bed.

50

My tantalized spirit
Here blandly reposes.
Forgetting, or never
Regretting its roses—
Its old agitations
Of myrtles and roses;

For now, while so quietly
Lying, it fancies
A holier odour
About it, of pansies—
A rosemary odour,
Commingled with pansies—
With rue and the beautiful
Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
And the beauty of Annie—
Drowned in a bath
Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently
To sleep on her breast—
Deeply to sleep
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished
She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
To keep me from harm—
To the queen of the angels
To shield me from harm.

180

And I lie so composedly,
Now, in my bed,
(Knowing her love)
That you fancy me dead—
And I rest so contentedly,
Now, in my bed,
(With her love at my breast)
That you fancy me dead—
That you shudder to look at me,
Thinking me dead ;—

10

But my heart it is brighter
Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
For it sparkles with Annie—
It glows with the light
Of the love of my Annie—
With the thought of the light
Of the eyes of my Annie.

100

TO MY MOTHER

[His mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm.]

BECAUSE I feel that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,
None so devotional as that of 'Mother',
Therefore by that dear name I long have called you—
You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed you
In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother—my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother of myself; but you 10
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

TAKE this kiss upon the brow !
 And, in parting from you now,
 Thus much let me avow—
 You are not wrong, who deem
 That my days have been a dream ;
 Yet if hope has flown away
 In a night, or in a day,
 In a vision, or in none,
 Is it therefore the less *gone* ?
All that we see or seem
 Is but a dream within a dream.

10

I stand amid the roar
 Of a surf-tormented shore,
 And I hold within my hand
 Grains of the golden sand—
 How few ! yet how they creep
 Through my fingers to the deep,
 While I weep—while I weep !
 O God ! can I not grasp
 Them with a tighter clasp ?
 O God ! can I not save
 One from the pitiless wave ?
 Is *all* that we see or seem
 But a dream within a dream ?

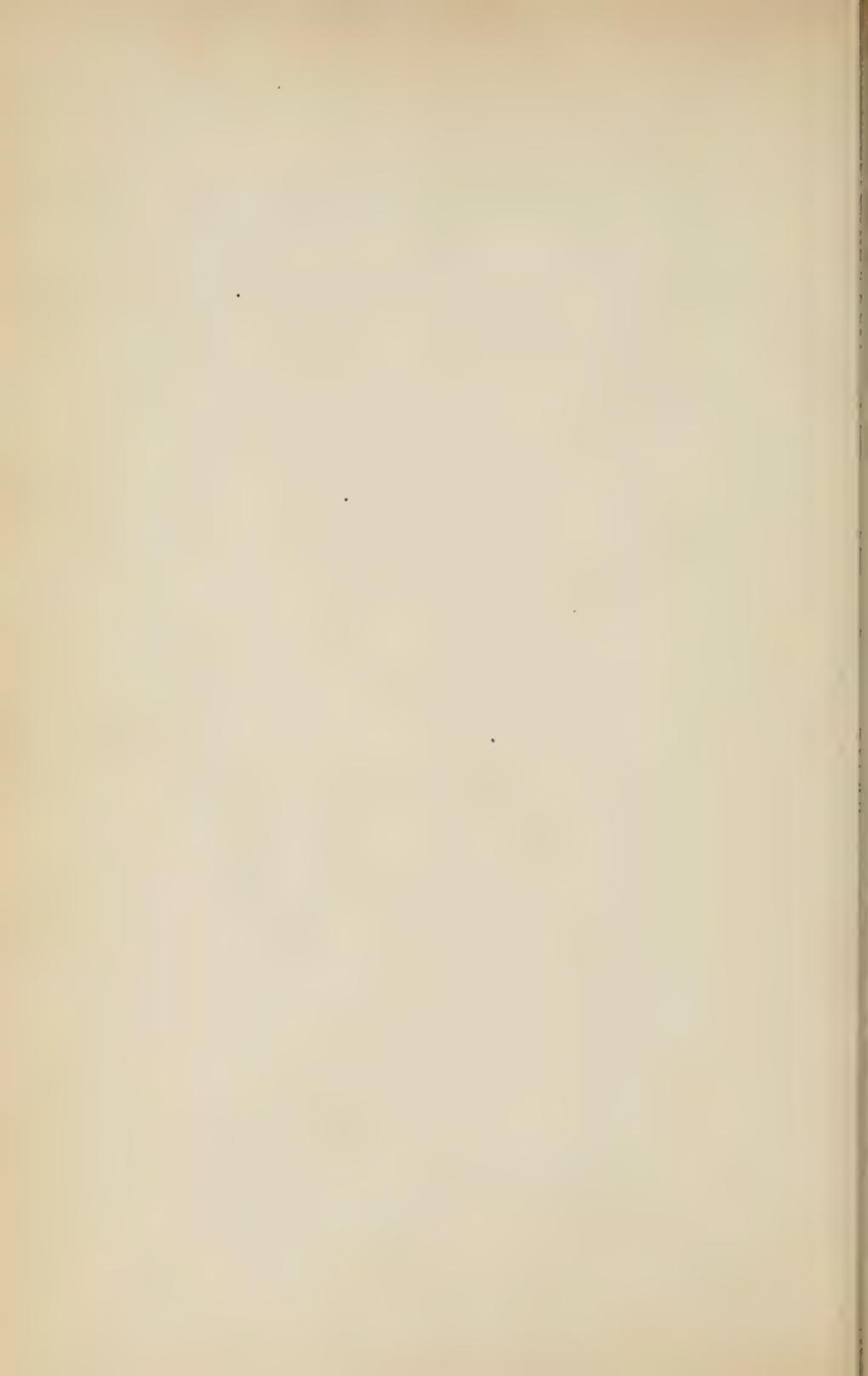
20

ALONE

[*Scribner's Magazine*, September 1875.]

FROM childhood's hour I have not been
As others were ; I have not seen
As others saw ; I could not bring
My passions from a common spring.
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow ; I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone ;
And all I loved, *I* loved alone.

Then—in my childhood, in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn 10
From every depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still :
From the torrent, or the fountain,
From the red cliff of the mountain,
From the sun that round me rolled
In its autumn tint of gold,
From the lightning in the sky
As it passed me flying by,
From the thunder and the storm,
And the cloud that took the form 20
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view.



OTHER TEXTS FOR SOME OF
THE POEMS



SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

[*Tamerlane and other Poems*, 1827. Here called *Visit of the Dead*.]

THY soul shall find itself alone—
 Alone of all on earth—unknown
 The cause—but none are near to pry
 Into thine hour of secrecy.
 Be silent in that solitude,
 Which is not loneliness—for then
 The spirits of the dead, who stood
 In life before thee, are again
 In death around thee, and their will
 Shall then o'ershadow thee—be still : 10
 For the night, tho' clear, shall frown ;
 And the stars shall not look down
 From their thrones, in the dark heaven,
 With light like Hope to mortals given,
 But their red orbs, without beam,
 To thy withering heart shall seem
 As a burning, and a fever
 Which would cling to thee forever.
 But 'twill leave thee, as each star
 In the morning light afar 20
 Will fly thee—and vanish :
 —But its *thought* thou canst not banish.
 The breath of God will be still ;
 And the mist upon the hill
 By that summer breeze unbroken
 Shall charm thee—as a token,
 And a symbol which shall be
 Secrecy in thee.

THE VALLEY OF UNREST

[*Poems of Edgar A. Poe*, 1831. Here called 'The Valley Nis'.]

FAR away—far away—
 Far away—as far at least
 Lies that valley as the day
 Down within the golden east—
 All things lovely—are not they
 Far away—far away ?

It is called the Valley Nis.
 And a Syriac tale there is
 Thereabout which Time hath said
 Shall not be interpreted. 10
 Something about Satan's dart—
 Something about angel wings—
 Much about a broken heart—
 All about unhappy things :
 But 'the Valley Nis' at best
 Means 'the valley of unrest'.

Once a smil'd, a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell,
Having gone unto the wars—
And the sly, mysterious stars, 20
With a visage full of meaning,
O'er the unguarded flowers were leaning :
Or the sun ray dripp'd all red
Thro' the tulips overhead,
Then grew paler as it fell
On the quiet Asphodel.

Now the *unhappy* shall confess
Nothing there is motionless :
Helen, like thy human eye
There th' uneasy violets lie— 30
There the reedy grass doth wave
Over the old forgotten grave—
One by one from the treetop
There the eternal dews do drop—
There the vague and dreamy trees
Do roll like seas in northern breeze
Around the stormy Hebrides—
There the gorgeous clouds do fly,
Rustling everlastingily,
Through the terror-stricken sky. 40
Rolling like a waterfall
O'er th' horizon's fiery wal'—
There the moon doth shine by night
With a most unsteady light—
There the sun doth reel by day
'Over the hills and far away'.

THE SLEEPER

[*Poems by Edgar A. Poe, 1831.* Here called 'Irene'.]

'Tis now (so sings the soaring moon)
 Midnight in the sweet month of June,
 When winged visions love to lie
 Lazily upon beauty's eye,
 Or worse—upon her brow to dance
 In panoply of old romance,
 Till thoughts and locks are left, alas!
 A ne'er-to-be untangled mass.

An influence dewy, drowsy, dim,
 Is dripping from that golden rim ; 10
 Grey towers are mouldering into rest,
 Wrapping their fog around their breast :
 Looking like Lethe, see ! the lake
 A conscious slumber seems to take,
 And would not for the world awake ;
 The rosemary sleeps upon the grave—
 The lily lolls upon the wave—
 And million bright pines to and fro,
 Are rocking lullabies as they go,
 To the lone oak that reels with bliss, 20
 Nodding above the dim abyss.
 All beauty sleeps : and lo ! where lies
 With easement open to the skies,
 Irene, with her destinies !

Thus hums the moon within her ear,

‘O lady sweet! how camest thou here?

Strange are thine eyelids—strange thy dress!

And strange thy glorious length of tress!

Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,

A wonder to our desert trees!

30

Some gentle wind hath thought it right

To open thy window to the night,

And wanton airs from the tree-top,

Laughingly thro' the lattice drop,

And wave this crimson canopy,

Like a banner o'er thy dreaming eye!

Lady, awake! lady, awake!

For the holy Jesus' sake!

For strangely—fearfully in this hall

My tinted shadows rise and fall!’

40

The lady sleeps: the *dead* all sleep—

At least as long as Love doth weep:

Entranc'd, the spirit loves to lie

As long as—tears on Memory's eye:

But when a week or two go by,

And the light laughter chokes the sigh,

Indignant from the tomb doth take

Its way to some remember'd lake,

Where oft—in life—with friends—it went

To bathe in the pure element,

50

And there, from the untrodden grass,

Wreathing for its transparent brow

Those flowers that say (ah, hear them now!)

To the night-winds as they pass,

‘Ai! ai! alas!—alas!’

Pores for a moment, ere it go,
On the clear waters there that flow,
Then sinks within (weigh'd down by woe)
Th' uncertain, shadowy heaven below.

The lady sleeps : oh ! may her sleep 60
As it is lasting so be deep—
No icy worms about her creep :
I pray to God that she may lie
For ever with as calm an eye,
That chamber chang'd for one more holy—
That bed for one more melancholy.

Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold,
Against whose sounding door she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone— 70
Some tomb, which oft hath flung its black
And vampire-wingèd panels back,
Flutt'ring triumphant o'er the palls
Of her old family funerals.

LENORE

[*Poems by Edgar A. Poe, 1831. Here called ‘A Paean’.*]

How shall the burial rite be read?
 The solemn song be sung?
 The requiem for the loveliest dead,
 That ever died so young?

Her friends are gazing on her,
 And on her gaudy bier,
 And weep!—oh! to dishonour
 Dead beauty with a tear!

They loved her for her wealth—
 And they hated her for her pride—
 But she grew in feeble health,
 And they *love* her—that she died. 10

They tell me (while they speak
 Of her ‘costly-broider’d pall’)
 That my voice is growing weak—
 That I should not sing at all—

Or that my tone should be
 Tun’d to such solemn song,
 So mournfully—so mournfully,
 That the dead may feel no wrong. 20

But she is gone above,
 With young Hope at her side,
 And I am drunk with love
 Of the dead, who is my bride—

Of the dead—dead who lies
All perfum'd there,
With the death upon her eyes,
And the life upon her hair.

Thus on the coffin loud and long
I strike—the murmur sent 30
Through the grey chambers to my song,
Shall be the accompaniment.

Thou died'st in thy life's June—
But thou didst not die too fair :
Thou didst not die too soon,
Nor with too calm an air.

From more than friends on earth
Thy life and love are riven,
To join the untainted mirth
Of more than thrones in heaven— 40

Therefore, to thee this night
I will no requiem raise,
But waft thee on thy flight,
With a Paean of old days.

LENORE

[*The Pioneer*, 1843.]

AH, broken is the golden bowl!
The Spirit flown forever!
Let the bell toll!—A saintly soul
Glides down the Stygian river!
And let the burial rite be read—
The funeral song be sung—
A dirge for the most lovely dead
That ever died so young!
And, Guy de Vere,
Hast thou no tear?
Weep now or never more!
See, on yon drear
And rigid bier,
Low lies thy love Lenore.

10

‘
Yon heir, whose cheeks of pallid hue
With tears are streaming wet,
Sees only, through
Their crocodile dew,
A vacant coronet—
False friends ! ye lov’d her for her wealth 20
And hated her for her pride,
And, when she fell in feeble health,
Ye bless’d her—that she died.
How *shall* the ritual, then, be read ?
The requiem *how* be sung
For her most wrong’d of all the dead
That ever died so young ?’

Peccavimus!

But rave not thus!

And let the solemn song

30

Go up to God so mournfully that *she* may feel no wrong!

The sweet Lenore

Hath ‘gone before’

With young Hope at her side,

And thou art wild

For the dear child

That should have been thy bride—

For her, the fair

And debonair,

That now so lowly lies—

40

The life still there

Upon her hair,

The death upon her eyes.

‘Avaunt!—to-night

My heart is light—

No dirge will I upraise,

But waft the angel on her flight

With a Paean of old days!

Let *no* bell toll!

Lest her sweet soul,

50

Amid its hallow’d mirth,

Should catch the note

As it doth float

Up from the damned earth—

To friends above, from fiends below,

Th’ indignant ghost is riven—

From grief and moan

To a gold throne

Beside the King of Heaven.’

ISRAFEL

[*Poems by Edgar A. Poe, 1831.*]

I

IN Heaven a spirit doth dwell
 Whose heart-strings are a lute ;
 None sing so wild—so well
 As the angel Israfel—
 And the giddy stars are mute.

II

Tottering above
 In her highest noon,
 The enamoured moon
 blushes with love—
 While, to listen, the red levin
 Pauses in Heaven.

10

III

And they say (the starry choir
 And all the listening things)
 That Israfeli's fire
 Is owing to that lyre
 With those unusual strings.

IV

But the Heavens that angel trod,
 Where deep thoughts are a duty—
 Where Love is a grown god—
 Where Houri glances are—
 Stay ! turn thine eyes afar !
 Imbued with all the beauty
 Which we worship in yon star.

20

V

Thou art not, therefore, wrong
 Israfeli, who despisest
 An unimpassion'd song :
 To thee the laurels belong,
 Best bard,—because the wisest.

VI

The ecstacies above
 With thy burning measures suit—
 Thy grief—if any—thy love
 With the fervour of thy lute—
 Well may the stars be mute !

30

VII

Yes, Heaven is thine : but this
 Is a world of sweets and sours :
 Our flowers are merely—flowers,
 And the shadow of thy bliss
 Is the sunshine of ours.

VIII

If I did dwell where Israfel
 Hath dwelt, and he where I,
 He would not sing one half so well—
 One half so passionately,
 While a stormier note than this would swell
 From my lyre within the sky.

40

THE CITY IN THE SEA

[*Poems by Edgar A. Poe, 1831.* Here called ‘The Doomed City’.]

Lo ! Death hath rear'd himself a throne
 In a strange city, all alone,
 Far down within the dim West—
 And the good, and the bad, and the worst, and the best,
 Have gone to their eternal rest.

There shrines, and palaces, and towers
 Are—not like anything of ours—
 O ! no—O ! no—*ours* never loom
 To heaven with that ungodly gloom !
 Time-eaten towers that tremble not ! 15
 Around, by lifting winds forgot,
 Resignedly beneath the sky
 The melancholy waters lie.

A heaven that God doth not contemn
 With stars is like a diadem
 We liken our ladies' eyes to them—
 But there ! that everlasting pall !
 It would be mockery to call
 Such dreariness a heaven at all.

Yet tho' no holy rays come down 20
 On the long night-time of that town,
 Light from the lurid, deep sea
 Streams up the turrets silently—

Up thrones—up long-forgotten bowers
 Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
 Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
 Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—

Up many a melancholy shrine,
Whose entablatures intertwine
The mask—the viol—and the vine.

30

There open temples—open graves
Are on a level with the waves—
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye,
Not the gaily-jewell'd dead
Tempt the waters from their bed :
For no ripples curl, alas !
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings hint that winds may be
Upon a far-off happier sea :
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from the high towers of the town
Death looks gigantically down.

40

But lo ! a stir is in the air !
The wave ! there is a ripple there !
As if the towers had thrown aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if the turret-tops had given
A vacuum in the filmy Heaven :
The waves have now a redder glow—
The very hours are breathing low—
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence,
And Death to some more happy clime
Shall give his undivided time.

50

TAMERLANE

[*Tamerlane and other Poems*, 1827.]

I

I HAVE sent for thee, holy friar ;
 But 'twas not with the drunken hope,
 Which is but agony of desire
 To shun the fate, with which to cope
 Is more than crime may dare to dream,
 That I have call'd thee at this hour :
 Such, father, is not my theme—
 Nor am I mad, to deem that power
 Of earth may shrive me of the sin
 Unearthly pride hath revell'd in—
 I would not call thee fool, old man,
 But hope is not a gift of thine ;
 If I can hope (O God ! I can)
 It falls from an eternal shrine.

10

II

The gay wall of this gaudy tower
 Grows dim around me—death is near.
 I had not thought, until this hour
 When passing from the earth, that ear
 Of any, were it not the shade
 Of one whom in life I made
 All mystery but a simple name,
 Might know the secret of a spirit
 Bow'd down in sorrow, and in shame.—

20

Shame, said'st thou ?

Ay, I did inherit
That hated portion, with the fame,
The worldly glory, which has shown
A demon-light around my throne,
Scorching my sear'd heart with a pain
Not Hell shall make me fear again.

III

I have not always been as now—
The fever'd diadem on my brow
I claim'd and won usurpingly—
Ay—the same heritage hath given
Rome to the Caesar—this to me ;
The heirdom of a kingly mind—
And a proud spirit, which hath striven
Triumphantly with human kind.

30

In mountain air I first drew life ;
The mists of the Taglay have shed
Nightly their dews on my young head ;
And my brain drank their venom then,
When after day of perilous strife
With chamois, I would seize his den
And slumber, in my pride of power,
The infant monarch of the hour—
For, with the mountain dew by night,
My soul imbibed unhallow'd feeling ;
And I would feel its essence stealing
In dreams upon me—while the light
Flashing from cloud that hovered o'er,
Would seem to my half-closing eye
The pageantry of monarchy !

40

50

And the deep thunder's echoing roar
 Came hurriedly upon me, telling
 Of war, and tumult, where my voice,
 My *own* voice, silly child ! was swelling
 (O how would my wild heart rejoice
 And leap within me at the cry)
 The battle-cry of victory !

IV

The rain came down upon my head 60
 But barely shelter'd—and the wind
 Pass'd quickly o'er me—but my mind
 Was maddening—for 'twas man that shed
 Laurels upon me—and the rush,
 The torrent of the chilly air
 Gurgled in my pleased ear the crush
 Of empires, with the captive's prayer,
 The hum of suitors, the mix'd tone
 Of flattery round a sovereign's throne.

The storm had ceased—and I awoke— 70
 Its spirit cradled me to sleep,
 And as it pass'd me by, there broke
 Strange light upon me, tho' it were
 My soul in mystery to steep :
 For I was not as I had been ;
 The child of Nature, without care,
 Or thought, save of the passing scene.—

V

My passions, from that hapless hour,
 Usurp'd a tyranny, which men
 Have deem'd, since I have reach'd to power, 80
 My innate nature—be it so :
 But, father, there lived one who, then—

Then, in my boyhood, when their fire
 Burn'd with a still intenser glow ;
 (For passion must with youth expire)
 Even *then*, who deem'd this iron heart
 In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no word, alas ! to tell
 The loveliness of loving well !
 Nor would I dare attempt to trace 90
 The breathing beauty of a face,
 Which even to *my* impassion'd mind,
 Leaves not its memory behind.
 In spring of life have ye ne'er dwelt
 Some object of delight upon,
 With steadfast eye, till ye have felt
 The earth reel—and the vision gone ?
 And I have held to memory's eye
 One object—and but one—until
 Its very form hath pass'd me by,
 But left its influence with me still. 100

VI

"Tis not to thee that I should name—
 Thou canst not—wouldst not dare to think
 The magic empire of a flame
 Which even upon this perilous brink
 Hath fix'd my soul, tho' unforgiven,
 By what it lost for passion—Heaven.
 I loved—and O, how tenderly !
 Yes ! she [was] worthy of all love !
 Such as in infancy was mine, 110
 Tho' then its *passion* could not be :
 "Twas such as angel minds above
 Might envy—her young heart the shrine

On which my every hope and thought
 Were incense—then a goodly gift—
 For they were childish, without sin,
 Pure as her young example taught ;
 Why did I leave it and adrift,
 Trust to the fickle star within ?

VII

We grew in age and love together 120
 Roaming the forest and the wild ;
 My breast her shield in wintry weather,
 And when the friendly sunshine smiled
 And she would mark the opening skies,
 I saw no Heaven but in her eyes—
 Even childhood knows the human heart ;
 For when, in sunshine and in smiles,
 From all our little cares apart,
 Laughing at her half silly wiles,
 I'd throw me on her throbbing breast, 130
 And pour my spirit out in tears,
 She'd look up in my wilder'd eye—
 There was no need to speak the rest—
 No need to quiet her kind fears—
 She did not ask the reason why.

The hallow'd memory of those years
 Comes o'er me in these lonely hours,
 And, with sweet loveliness, appears
 As perfume of strange summer flowers ;
 Of flowers which we have known before 140
 In infancy, which seen, recall
 To mind—not flowers alone—but more,
 Our earthly life, and love—and all.

VIII

Yes ! she was worthy of all love !
 Even such as from the accursed time
 My spirit with the tempest strove,
 When on the mountain peak alone,
 Ambition lent it a new tone,
 And bade it first to dream of crime,
 My frenzy to her bosom taught : 150
 We still were young : no purer thought
 Dwelt in a seraph's breast than *thine* ;
 For passionate love is still divine :
I loved her as an angel might
 With ray of all living light
 Which blazes upon Edis' shrine.
 It is not surely sin to name,
 With such as mine—that mystic flame,
 I had no being but in thee !
 The world with all its train of bright 160
 And happy beauty (for to me
 All was an undefined delight),
 The world—its joy—its share of pain
 Which I felt not—its bodied forms
 Of varied being, which contain
 The bodiless spirits of the storms,
 The sunshine, and the calm—the ideal
 And fleeting vanity of dreams,
 Fearfully beautiful ! the real
 Nothings of mid day waking life— 170
 Of an enchanted life, which seems,
 Now as I look back, the strife
 Of some ill demon, with a power
 Which left me in an evil hour,

All I that felt, or saw, or thought,
 Crowding, confused became
 (With thine unearthly beauty fraught)
 Thou—and the nothing of a name.

IX

The passionate spirit which hath known,
 And deeply felt the silent tone 180
 Of its own self-supremacy,—
 (I speak thus openly to thee,
 'Twere folly *now* to veil a thought
 With which this aching breast is fraught)
 The soul which feels its innate right—
 The mystic empire and high power
 Given by the energetic might
 Of Genius, at its natal hour ;
 Which knows (believe me at this time,
 When falsehood were a tenfold crime, 190
 There *is* a power in the high spirit
 To *know* the fate it will inherit)
 The soul, which knows such power, will still
 Find *Pride* the ruler of its will.

Yes ! I was proud—and ye who know
 The magic of that meaning word,
 So oft perverted, will bestow
 Your scorn, perhaps, when ye have heard
 That the proud spirit had been broken,
 The proud heart burst in agony 200
 At one upbraiding word or token
 Of her that heart's idolatry—
 I was ambitious—have ye known
 Its fiery passion ?—ye have not—

A cottager, I mark'd a throne
 Of half the world, as all my own,
 And murmur'd at such lowly lot!
 But it hath pass'd me as a dream
 Which, of light step, flies with the dew,
 That kindling thought—did not the beam 210
 Of Beauty, which did guide it through
 The livelong summer day, oppress
 My mind with double loveliness—

X

We walk'd together to the crown
 Of a high mountain, which look'd down
 Afar from its proud natural towers
 Of rock and forest, on the hills—
 The dwindle^d hills, whence amid bowers
 Her own fair hand had rear'd around,
 Gush'd shoutingly a thousand rills, 220
 Which as it were, in fairy bound
 Embraced two hamlets—those our own.—
 Peacefully happy—yet alone—

I spoke to her of power and pride—
 But mystically, in such guise,
 That she might deem it nought beside
 The moment's converse; in her eyes
 I read (perhaps too carelessly)
 A mingled feeling with my own;
 The flush on her bright cheek, to me, 230
 Seem'd to become a queenly throne
 Too well, that I should let it be
 A light in the dark wild, alone.

xi

There—in that hour—a thought came o'er
My mind, it had not known before—
To leave her while we both were young,—
To follow my high fate among
The Strife of nations, and redeem
The idle words, which, as a dream
Now sounded to her heedless ear—
I held no doubt—I knew no fear
Of peril in my wild career ;
To gain an empire, and throw down
As nuptial dowry—a queen's crown,
The only feeling which possest,
With her own image, my fond breast—
Who, that had known the secret thought
Of a young peasant's bosom then,
Had deem'd him, in compassion, aught
But one, whom fantasy had led 240
Astray from reason—Among men
Ambition is chain'd down—nor fed
(As in the desert, where the grand,
The wild, the beautiful, conspire
With their own breath to fan its fire)
With thoughts such feeling can command ;
Uncheck'd by sarcasm, and scorn
Of those, who hardly will conceive
That any should become 'great', born
In their own sphere—will not believe 250
That they shall stoop in life to one
Whom daily they are wont to see
Familiarly—whom Fortune's sun
Hath ne'er shone dazzlingly upon,
Lowly—and of their own degree—
260

XII

I pictured to my fancy's eye
 Her silent, deep astonishment,
 When, a few fleeting years gone by
 (For short the time my high hope lent
 To its most desperate intent,) 270
 She might recall in him, whom Fame
 Had gilded with a conqueror's name
 (With glory—such as might inspire
 Perforce, a passing thought of one,
 Whom she had deem'd in his own fire
 Wither'd and blasted; who had gone
 A traitor, violate of the truth
 So plighted in his early youth,) 280
 Her own Alexis, who should plight
 The love he plighted *then*—again,
 And raise his infancy's delight,
 The pride and queen of Tamerlane.—

XIII

One noon of a bright summer's day
 I pass'd from out the matted bower
 Where in a deep, still slumber lay
 My Ada. In that peaceful hour
 A silent gaze was my farewell.
 I had no other solace—then
 To awake her, and a falsehood tell
 Of a feign'd journey, were again 290
 To trust the weakness of my heart
 To her soft thrilling voice: to part
 Thus, haply, while in sleep she dream'd
 Of long delight, nor yet had deem'd
 Awake, that I had held a thought

Of parting, were with madness fraught ;
 I knew not woman's heart, alas !
 Tho' loved, and loving—let it pass.—

XIV

I went from out the matted bower,
 And hurried madly on my way : 300
 And felt, with every flying hour,
 That bore me from my home, more gay ;
 There is of earth an agony
 Which, ideal, still may be
 The worst ill of mortality.
 'Tis bliss, in its own reality,
 Too real, to *his* breast who lives
 Not within himself but gives
 A portion of his willing soul
 To God, and to the great whole— 310
 To him, whose loving Spirit will dwell
 With Nature, in her wild paths : tell
 Of her wondrous ways, and telling bless
 Her overpowering loveliness !
 A more than agony to him
 Whose failing sight will grow dim
 With its own living gaze upon
 That loveliness around : the sun—
 The blue sky—the misty light
 Of the pale cloud therein, whose hue 320
 Is grace to its heavenly bed of blue ;
 Dim ! tho' looking on all bright !
 O God ! when the thoughts that may not pass
 Will burst upon him, and alas !
 For the flight on Earth to Fancy given,
 There are no words—unless of Heaven.

XV

Look round thee now on Samarcand,
 Is she not queen of earth? her pride
 Above all cities? in her hand
 Their destinies? with all beside 330
 Of glory, which the world hath known?
 Stands she not proudly and alone?
 And who her Sovereign? Timur, he
 Whom the astonish'd earth hath seen,
 With victory, on victory,
 Redoubling age! and more, I ween,
 The Zinghis' yet re-echoing fame.
 And now what has he? what! a name.
 The sound of revelry by night
 Comes o'er me, with the mingled voice 340
 Of many with a breast as light,
 As if 'twere not the dying hour
 Of one, in whom they did rejoice—
 As in a leader, haply—Power
 Its venom secretly imparts:
 Nothing have I with human hearts.

XVI

When Fortune mark'd me for her own,
 And my proud hopes had reach'd a throne
 (It boots me not, good friar, to tell
 A tale the world but knows too well, 350
 How by what hidden deeds of might,
 I clamber'd to the tottering height,)
 I still was young; and well I ween
 My spirit what it e'er had been.
 My eyes were still on pomp and power,

My wilder'd heart was far away
In valleys of the wild Taglay,
In mine own Ada's matted bower.
I dwelt not long in Samarcand
Ere, in a peasant's lowly guise, 360
I sought my long-abandon'd land ;
By sunset did its mountains rise
In dusky grandeur to my eyes :
But as I wander'd on the way
My heart sunk with the sun's ray.
To him who still would gaze upon
The glory of the summer sun,
There comes, when that sun will from him part,
A sullen hopelessness of heart.
That soul will hate the evening mist 370
So often lovely, and will list
To the sound of the coming darkness (known
To those whose spirits hearken) as one
Who in a dream of night *would* fly,
But cannot, from a danger nigh.
What though the moon—the silvery moon—
Shine on his path, in her high noon ;
Her smile is chilly, and *her* beam
In that time of dreariness will seem
As the portrait of one after death ; 380
A likeness taken when the breath
Of young life, and the fire of the eye,
Hail lately been, but had pass'd by.
'Tis thus when the lovely summer sun
Of our boyhood his course hath run :
For all we live to know—is known ;
And all we seek to keep—hath flown ;
With the noonday beauty, which is all.

Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall—
 The transient, passionate day-flower, 390
 Withering at the evening hour.

XVII

I reach'd my home—my home no more—
 For all was flown that made it so—
 I pass'd from out its mossy door,
 In vacant idleness of woe.
 There met me on its threshold stone
 A mountain hunter, I had known
 In childhood, but he knew me not.
 Something he spoke of the old cot :
 It had seen better days, he said ; 400
There rose a fountain once, and *there*
 Full many a fair flower raised its head :
 But she who reared them was long dead,
 And in such follies had no part,
 What was there left me *now* ? despair—
 A kingdom for a broken—heart.

NOTES ON TAMERLANE

1827 TEXT

1. 1. *I have sent for thee, holy friar.* Of the history of Tamerlane little is known ; and with that little I have taken the full liberty of a poet.—That he was descended from the family of Zinghis Khan is more than probable—but he is vulgarly supposed to have been the son of a shepherd, and to have raised himself to the throne by his own address. He died in the year 1405, in the time of Pope Innocent VII.

How I shall account for giving him ‘a friar’, as a death-bed confessor—I cannot exactly determine. He wanted some one to listen to his tale—and why not a friar? It does not pass

the bounds of possibility—quite sufficient for my purpose—and I have at least good authority for such innovations.

1. 39. *The mists of the Taglay have shed.* The mountains of Belur Taglay are a branch of the Imaus, in the southern part of Independent Tartary. They are celebrated for the singular wildness and beauty of their valleys.

ll. 151–2. *No purer thought Dwelt in a seraph's breast than thine.* I must beg the reader's pardon for making Tamerlane, a Tartar of the fourteenth century, speak in the same language as a Boston gentleman of the nineteenth; but of the Tartar mythology we have little information.

1. 156. *Which blazes upon Edis' shrine.* A deity presiding over virtuous love, upon whose imaginary altar a sacred fire was continually blazing.

ll. 258–60. *who hardly will conceive That any should become 'great', born In their own sphere.* Although Tamerlane speaks this, it is not the less true. It is a matter of the greatest difficulty to make the generality of mankind believe that one with whom they are upon terms of intimacy shall be called, in the world, a 'great man'. The reason is evident. There are few great men. Their actions are consequently viewed by the mass of the people through the medium of distance. The prominent parts of their characters are alone noted; and those properties, which are minute and common to every one, not being observed, seem to have no connection with a great character.

Who ever read the private memorials, correspondence &c., which have become so common in our time, without wondering that 'great men' should act and think 'so abominably'?

1. 279. *Her own Alexis, who should plight.* That Tamerlane acquired his renown under a feigned name is not entirely a fiction.

1. 327. *Look round thee now on Samarcand.* I believe it was after the battle of Angora that Tamerlane made Samarcand his residence. It became for a time the seat of learning and the arts.

1. 333. *And who her sovereign? Timur.* He was called Timur Bek as well as Tamerlane.

1. 337. *The Zinghis' yet re-echoing fame.* The conquests of Tamerlane far exceeded those of Zinghis Khan. He boasted to have two-thirds of the world at his command.

ll. 372–3. *the sound of the coming darkness (known To those whose spirits hearken).* I have often fancied that I could distinctly

hear the sound of the darkness, as it steals over the horizon—a foolish fancy, perhaps, but not more unintelligible than to see music—

The mind the music breathing from her face.

1. 389. *Let life, then, as the day flower, fall.* There is a flower (I have never known its botanic name) vulgarly called the day-flower. It blooms beautifully in the daylight, but withers towards evening, and by night its leaves appear totally shrivelled and dead. I have forgotten, however, to mention in the text, that it lives again in the morning. If it will not flourish in Tartary, I must be forgiven for carrying it thither.

A ROMANCE

[*Poems by Edgar A. Poe, 1831. Here called ‘Introduction’.*]

ROMANCE, who loves to nod and sing,
 With drowsy head and folded wing,
 Among the green leaves as they shake
 Far down within some shadowy lake,
 To me a painted paroquet
 Hath been—a most familiar bird—
 Taught me my alphabet to say,—
 To lisp my very earliest word
 While in the wild-wood I did lie,
 A child—with a most knowing eye.

10

Succeeding years, too wild for song,
 Then roll'd like tropic storms along,
 Where, tho' the garish lights that fly
 Dying along the troubled sky,
 Lay bare, thro' vistas thunder-riven,
 The blackness of the general Heaven,
 That very blackness yet doth fling
 Light on the lightning's silver wing.

For, being an idle boy lang syne,
 Who read Anacreon, and drank wine,
 I early found Anacreon rhymes
 Were almost passionate sometimes—
 And by strange alchemy of brain
 His pleasures always turn'd to pain—
 His naïveté to wild desire—

20

His wit to love—his wine to fire—
 And so, being young and dipt in folly,
 I fell in love with melancholy,
 And used to throw my earthly rest
 And quiet all away in jest—
 I could not love except where Death
 Was mingling his with Beauty's breath—
 Or Hymen, Time, and Destiny
 Were stalking between her and me.

30

O, then the eternal Condor years
 So shook the very Heavens on high,
 With tumult as they thunder'd by :
 I had no time for idle cares,
 Thro' gazing on the unquiet sky !
 Or if an hour with calmer wing
 Its down did on my spirit fling,
 That little hour with lyre and rhyme
 To while away—bidden thing !
 My heart half fear'd to be a crime
 Unless it trembled with the string.

40

But *now* my soul hath too much room—
 Gone are the glory and the gloom—
 The black hath mellow'd into grey,
 And all the fires are fading away.

My draught of passion hath been deep— 50
 I revell'd, and I now would sleep—
 And after-drunkenness of soul
 Succeeds the glories of the bowl—
 An idle longing night and day
 To dream my very life away.

But dreams—of those who dream as I,
Aspiringly, are damned, and die:
Yet should I swear I mean alone,
By notes so very shrilly blown,
To break upon Time's monotone,
While yet my vapid joy and grief
Are tintless of the yellow leaf—
Why not an imp the greybeard hath,
Will shake his shadow in my path—
And even the greybeard will o'erlook
Connivingly my dreaming-book.

60

FAIRY LAND

[*Poems by Edgar A. Poe, 1831.*]

SIT down beside me, Isabel,
Here, dearest, where the moonbeam fell
 Just now so fairy-like and well.
Now thou art dress'd for paradise !
 I am star-stricken with thine eyes !
 My soul is lolling on thy sighs !
 Thy hair is lifted by the moon
 Like flowers by the low breath of June !
 Sit down, sit down—how came we here ?
 Or is it all but a dream, my dear ?

10

You know that most enormous flower—
 That rose—that what d'ye call it—that hung
 Up like a dog-star in this bower—
 To-day (the wind blew, and) it swung
 So impudently in my face,
 So like a thing alive you know,
 I tore it from its pride of place
 And shook it into pieces—so
 Be all ingratitude requited.
 The winds ran off with it delighted,

20

And, thro' the opening left, as soon
 As she threw off her cloak, yon moon
 Has sent a ray down with a tune.

And this ray is a *fairy* ray—
Did you not say so, Isabel ?
How fantastically it fell
With a spiral twist and swell,
And over the wet grass rippled away
With a tinkling like a bell !

In my own country all the way 50

We can discover a moon ray
Which thro' some tattered curtain pries
Into the darkness of a room,
Is by (the very source of gloom)
The moats, and dust, and flies,
On which it trembles and lies
Like joy upon sorrow !

O, *when* will come the morrow ?

Isabel ! do you not fear -

The night and the wonders here ? 40

Dim vales ! and shadowy floods !

And cloudy-looking woods

Whose forms we can't discover

For the tears that drip all over !

Huge moons—see ! wax and wane—

Again—again—again—

Every moment of the night—

Forever changing places !

How they put out the starlight

With the breath from their pale faces ! 50

Lo ! one is coming down

With its centre on the crown

Of a mountain's eminence !

Down—still down—and down—
Now deep shall be—O deep !
The passion of our sleep !
For that wide circumference
In easy drapery falls
Drowsily over halls—
Over ruin'd walls—
Over waterfalls,
O'er the strange words—o'er the sea—
Alas ! over the sea !

THE LAKE

[*Tamerlane and other Poems, 1827.*]

IN youth's spring it was my lot
 To haunt of the wide earth a spot
 The which I could not love the less ;
 So lovely was the loneliness
 Of a wild lake, with black rock bound,
 And the tall pines that tower'd around.
 But when the night had thrown her pall
 Upon that spot—as upon all,
 And the wind would pass me by
 In its stilly melody, ~ 10
 My infant spirit would awake
 To the terror of the lone lake.
 Yet that terror was not fright—
 But a tremulous delight,
 And a feeling undefined,
 Springing from a darken'd mind.
 Death was in that poison'd wave
 And in its gulf a fitting grave
 For him who thence could solace bring
 To his dark imagining ; 20
 Whose wildering thought could even make
 An Eden of that dim lake.

THE BELLS—A SONG

[First Draft, 1848. Published in 'Sartain's Union Magazine',
Dec. 1849.]

THE Bells!—hear the bells!
The merry wedding bells!
The little silver bells!
How fairy-like a melody there swells
From the silver tinkling cells
Of the bells, bells, bells!
 Of the bells!

The Bells!—ah, the bells!
The heavy iron bells!
Hear the tolling of the bells!
 Hear the knells!
How horrible a monody there floats
From their throats—
 From their deep-toned throats!
How I shudder at the notes
From the melancholy throats
Of the bells, bells, bells!
 Of the bells!

NOTE

The editor of 'Sartain's Union Magazine' published 'The Bells', as we now have it, in November 1849; and the following month printed, as a literary curiosity, this 'First Draft' which, he says, 'came into our possession about a year since.'

"Poe wrote the first rough draft of *The Bells* at Mrs. Shew's residence. 'One day he came in,' she records,¹ 'and said,

¹ In her 'Diary'.

"Marie Louise, I have to write a poem : I have no feeling, no sentiment, no inspiration !'" His hostess persuaded him to have some tea. It was served in the conservatory, the windows of which were open, and admitted the sound of neighbouring church bells. Mrs. Shew said, playfully, 'Here is paper'; but the poet, declining it, declared, 'I so dislike the noise of bells to-night, I cannot write. I have no subject—I am exhausted.' The lady then took up the pen, and, pretending to mimic his style, wrote, 'The Bells, by E. A. Poe'; and then, in pure sportiveness, 'The Bells, the little silver Bells,' Poe finishing off the stanza. She then suggested for the next verse, 'The heavy iron Bells'; and this Poe also expanded into a stanza. He next copied out the complete poem, and headed it, *By Mrs. M. L. Shew,' remarking that it was her poem, as she had suggested and composed so much of it. Mrs. Shew continues, 'My brother came in, and I sent him to Mrs. Clemm to tell her that "her boy would stay in town, and was well". My brother took Mr. Poe to his own room, where he slept twelve hours, and could hardly recall the evening's work.'"—*Edgar Allan Poe, his Life, Letters, and Opinions*, by John H. Ingram 1880, vol. ii, pp. 155, 156.

TO — —

[Manuscript variation, entitled 'To Marie Louise'.]

Not long ago the writer of these lines,
 In the mad pride of intellectuality,
 Maintained 'the power of words'—denied that ever
 A thought arose within the human brain
 Beyond the utterance of the human tongue:
 And now, as if in mockery of that boast
 Two words—two foreign soft dissyllables—
 Two gentle sounds made only to be murmured
 By angels dreaming in the moon-lit dew
 That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon-hill 10
 Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart
 Unthought-like thoughts—scarcely the shades of
 thought—
 Bewildering fantasies—far richer visions
 Than even the seraph harper, Israfel,
 Who 'had the sweetest voice of all God's creatures',
 Would hope to utter. Ah, Marie Louise
 In deep humility I own that now
 All pride—all thought of power—all hope of fame—
 All wish for Heaven—is merged for evermore
 Beneath the palpitating tide of passion 20
 Heaped o'er my soul by thee. Its spells are
 broken—
 The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand—
 With that dear name as text I *cannot* write—
 I cannot speak—I cannot even think—

Alas ! I cannot feel ; for 'tis *not* feeling—
This standing motionless upon the golden
Threshold of the wide-open gate of Dreams,
Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,
And thrilling as I see upon the right—
Upon the left—and all the way along,
Amid the clouds of glory : far away
To where the prospect terminates—*thee only.*

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

[*Tamerlane and other Poems*, 1827. Here called 'Imitation'.]

A DARK unfathom'd tide
Of interminable pride—
A mystery, and a dream,
Should my early life seem ;
I say that dream was fraught
With a wild, and waking thought
Of beings that have been,
Which my spirit hath not seen,
Had I let them pass me by,
With a dreaming eye ! 10
Let none of earth inherit
That vision on my spirit ;
Those thoughts I would control,
As a spell upon his soul :
For that bright hope at last
And that light time have past,
And my worldly rest hath gone
With a sigh as it pass'd on :
I care not tho' it perish
With a thought I then did cherish. 20

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

*[Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems by Edgar A. Poe,
1829. Here called 'To ——'.]*

SHOULD my early life seem
 [As well it might] a dream—
 Yet I build no faith upon
 The king Napoleon—
 I look not up afar
 To my destiny in a star.

In parting from you now
 Thus much I will avow—
 There are beings, and have been
 Whom my spirit had not seen ; 10
 Had I let them pass me by
 With a dreaming eye—
 If my peace hath fled away
 In a night—or in a day—
 In a vision—or in none—
 Is it therefore the less gone ?

I am standing 'mid the roar
 Of a weather-beaten shore,
 And I hold within my hand
 Some particles of sand— 20
 How few ! and how they creep
 Thro' my fingers to the deep !

My early hopes? no—they
Went gloriously away,
Like lightning from the sky
At once—and so will I.

So young? Ah! no—not now—
Thou hast not seen my brow;
But they tell thee I am proud—
They lie—they lie aloud—
My bosom beats with shame
At the paltriness of name
With which they dare combine
A feeling such as mine—
Nor Stoic? I am not:
In the terror of my lot
I laugh to think how poor
That pleasure ‘to endure!’
What! shade of Zeus!—I!
Endure!—no—no—defy.

30

40

NOTES—MAINLY TEXTUAL

STANZAS. (PAGE 4.)

1. 10. *fever*]. The original edition has ‘ferver’. Our text first suggested by Mr. Ingram.

DREAMS. (PAGE 7.)

1. 16. *In climes of my imagining, apart*] A most ingenious emendation of Mr. Ingram’s, for the original ‘Inclines of mine imaginary apart’.

Readings of Wilmer MS. :—

1. 5. *cold*] dull

1. 6. *must*] shall

1. 7. *still, upon the lovely*] ever on the chilly

1. 14. *dreams of living*] dreary fields of

1. 15. *loveliness,—have left my very*] left unheedingly my

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD. (PAGE 9.)

The Wilmer MS. contains a few very slight variations, and after line 18 (end of verse 3) inserts

But ‘twill leave thee as each star
With the dewdrop flies afar.

See also *Visit of the Dead*.

TO M——. (PAGE 11.)

Readings of ‘Griswold’ :—

1. 1. *O! I care*] I heed

1. 4. *fever*] hatred

1. 5. *heed*] mourn

1. 7 *meddle with*] sorrow for

1. 8. *Who am a passer by*] Omit all lines after this. The Wilmer MS. contains some slight variations from text.

THE RAVEN. (PAGE 17.)

Readings of *American Whig Review*, February 1845, of *Broadway Journal*, i. 6, and of 1845 edition :—

1. 9. *sough!*] tried *Am. W. R.*; *B. J.*

1. 27. *s'illness*] darkness *Am. W. R.*; *B. J.*; 1845.

1. 31. *Back*] Then *Am. W. R.*; *B. J.*

1. 39. *minute*] instant *Am. W. R.*; *B. J.*; 1845.

1. 51. *liv ng human*] sublunary *Am. W. R.*

I. 60. *Then the bird said*] Quoth the raven *Am. W. R.*

I. 61. *Startled*] Wondering *Am. W. R.*

II. 65-6. *till . . . nevermore*]

So when Hope he would adjure
Stern Despair returned, instead of the sweet Hope he dared
adjure,
That sad answer nevermore. *Am. W. R.*

I. 67. *fancy*] sad soul 1845.

I. 80. *Seraphim whose*] angels whose faint *Am. W. R. ; B. J. ; 1845.*

I. 83. *Quaff, oh*] Let me *Am. W. R.*

Date of Composition.

(a) Statement, not supported by contemporary documents, by Dr. William Elliot Griffis in the *Home Journal*, November 5, 1884 : That Poe mentioned a poem 'to be called *The Raven*' to a Mrs. Barhyte (herself a contributor to the *New York Mirror*) when he was staying at the Barhyte trout ponds, Saratoga Springs, New York, in the summer of 1842, and showed that lady a draft of the poem during the following summer.

(b) Statement by Mr. Rosenbach in the *American*, February 26 1887, referring to the winter of 1843-4 : 'I read *The Raven* long before it was published, and was in Mr. George R. Graham's office when the poem was offered to him. Poe said that his wife and Mrs. Clemm were starving, and that he was in very pressing need of the money. I carried him fifteen dollars contributed by Mr. Graham, Mr. Godley, Mr. McMichel, and others, who condemned the poem, but gave the money as a charity.'

(c) Statement by F. G. Fairfield in *Scribner's Magazine*, October, 1875 : 'Poe then occupied a cottage at Fordham—a kind of poet's nook, just out of hearing of the busy hum of the city. He had walked all the way from New York that afternoon, and, having taken a cup of tea, went out in the evening and wandered about for an hour or more. His beloved Virginia was sick almost unto death ; he was without money to procure the necessary medicines. He was out till about ten o'clock. When he went in he sat at his writing-table and dashed off *The Raven*. He submitted it to Mrs. Clemm for her consideration the same night, and it was printed substantially as it was written.

*This account of the origin of the poem was communicated to me in the fall of 1865, by a gentleman who professed to be indebted to Mrs. Clemm for the facts as he stated them ; and in the course of a saunter in the south, in the summer of 1867,

I took occasion to verify his story by an interview with that aged lady.

'Let me now drop Mrs. Clemm's version for a paragraph to consider another, resting upon the testimony of Colonel du Solle, who was intimate with Poe at this period, and concurred in by other literary contemporaries, who used to meet him of a mid-day for a budget of gossip and a glass of ale at Sandy Welsh's cellar in Ann Street.

'Du Solle says that the poem was produced stanza by stanza at small intervals, and submitted by Poe piecemeal to the criticism and emendation of his intimates, who suggested various alterations and substitutions. Poe adopted many of them. Du Solle quotes particular instances of phrases that were incorporated at his suggestion, and thus *The Raven* was a kind of joint-stock affair in which many minds held small shares of intellectual capital. At length, when the last stone had been placed in position and passed upon, the structure was voted complete.'

THE VALLEY OF UNREST. (PAGE 24.)

Reading from *American Whig Review*, April 1845.

1. 19. *uneasily*] unceasingly. Insert after this line :—

They wave ; they weep ; and the tears as they well
From the depths of each pallid lily-bell,
Give a trickle and a tinkle and a knell.

See also *The Valley N's* and notes thereon.

BRIDAL BALLAD. (PAGE 25.)

Readings of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, January 1837.

1. 3. Insert after this :—

And many a rood of land.

11. 6, 7. Read :—

He has loved me long and well
And, when he breathed his vow.

1. 9. *rang as a knell*] were his who fell

1. 10. Omit.

1. 18. Omit.

1. 19. Insert after this :—

And thus they said I plighted
An irrevocable vow—
And my friends are all delighted
That his love I have requited—
And my mind is much benighted
If I am not happy now.

Lo ! the ring is on my hand,
 And the wreath is on my brow—
 Satins and jewels grand,
 And many a rood of land,
 Are all at my command,
 And I must be happy now.

- ll. 20-1. I have spoken, I have spoken
 They have registered the vow.

- l. 24. *Here is a ring, as*] Behold the golden ; also in ‘1845’.
 l. 25. *I am*] proves me ; also in ‘1845’.

THE SLEEPER. (PAGE 27.)

Readings of the *Saturday Museum*, March 4, 1843, and of ‘1845’.

- l. 16. Insert after this line :—

Her casement open to the skies *S. M.* ; 1845.

- l. 19. *window*] lattice *S. M.*

- ll. 20-1. Omit *S. M.*

- l. 44. *pale*] dim *S. M.* ; 1845.

See also *Irene* and notes thereon.

THE COLISEUM. (PAGE 29.)

Readings of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, August 1835.

- l. 11. Insert after this line :—Gaunt vestibules and phantom-peopled aisles

- l. 20. *gilded*] yellow

- l. 21. Insert after this line :—

Here where on ivory couch the Caesar sate
 On bed of moss lies gloating the foul adder.

- l. 26. *But stay ! these*] These crumbling

ivy-clad] tottering

- l. 28. *crumbling*] broken

- l. 31. *famed*] great

- l. 36. *melody*] in old days

- l. 39. *impotent*] desolate

LENORE. (PAGE 31.)

In the 1845 text, verse 4 (the last) reads :—

Avaunt ! to-night my heart is light. No dirge will I upraise,
 But waft the angel on her flight with a Paean of old days !

Let no bell toll!—lest her sweet soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note, as it doth float—up from the damned
Earth.

To friends above, from fiends below, the indignant ghost is
riven—

From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven—

From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the King of
Heaven.

CATHOLIC HYMN. (PAGE 33.)

Readings of *Southern Literary Messenger*, April 1835, and of
Burton's Gentleman's Magazine, November 1839:—

Insert before the first line

Sancta Maria! turn thine eyes
Upon the sinner's sacrifice
Of fervent prayer and humble love
From thy holy throne above.

1. 5. *brightly*] gently

1. 6. *not a cloud obscured*] no storms were in

1. 8. *grace*] love

1. 9. *storms*] clouds

1. 10. *Darkly*] All

ISRAFFEL. (PAGE 34.)

The motto is taken from *Lalla Rookh*, by Tom Moore, who quotes Sale, *Preliminary Discourse*, iv. 71. Poe interpolated ‘whose heart-strings are a lute’.

DREAMLAND. (PAGE 36.)

The ‘1845’ text has dews for tears in line 12. In *Graham's Magazine*, June 1844, the first six lines (with slight variations) are repeated at the end of verses 2 and 3.

1. 38. *Earth*] worms *G. M.*

SONNET—TO ZANTE. (PAGE 38.)

Evidently suggested by Chateaubriand, who writes: ‘Je souriais à ses noms d'Isola d'oro, de Fior di Levante. Ce nom de fleur me rappelle que l'hyacinthe étoit originaire de l'île de Zante, et que cette île reçut son nom de la plante qu'elle avoit portée.’

THE CITY IN THE SEA. (PAGE 39.)

Readings of the *American Whig Review*, April 1845.

- 1. 3. Far off in a region unblest
 - 1. 25. Around the mournful waters lie.
 - ll. 28-35. Omit.
 - 1. 36. *For no*] No murmuring
 - 1. 41. *seas less hideously*] oceans not so sad
- See also *The Doomed City* and notes thereon.

TO ONE IN PARADISE. (PAGE 41.)

In the *Spectator*, January 1, 1853, a correspondent printed a version of this poem from a manuscript which had been long in his possession. He attributed the poem to Tennyson and accused Poe of plagiarism. But on January 20 Tennyson himself wrote to correct the statement and to clear Poe.

Readings of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, July 1835 (where the poem is called *The Visionary*) :—

- 1. 5. *with fairy fruits and*] around about with
- ll. 7, 8. But the dream—it could not last
And the star of Hope did rise.
- 1. 15. Ambition—all—is o'er
- 1. 21. *days*] hours
- 1. 23. *grey*] dark ; also in '1845'.
- 1. 26. *eternal*] Italian

Insert after this line :—

Alas ! for that accursed Time
They bore thee o'er the billow,
From love to titled age and crime
And an unholy pillow—
From me, and from our misty clime
Where weeps the silver willow.

TO F—S S. O—D. (PAGE 43.)

Readings of *Southern Literary Messenger*, September 1835, and of *Barton's Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1839 :—

- 1. 1. Eliza, let thy generous heart *S. L. M.*
Fair maiden, let thy generous heart *B. G. M.*
- 1. 6. *grace, thy more than*] unassuming *S. L. M.*; *B. G. M.*
- 1. 7. *Shall be an endless*] And truth shall be a *S. L. M.* Thy truth—shall be a *B. G. M.*
- 1. 8. Forever—and love a duty. *S. L. M.*; *B. G. M.*

TO F.—. (PAGE 44.)

Readings of *Southern Literary Messenger*, July 1835, where it is called *To Mary*, and of *Graham's Magazine*, March 1842, where it is called *To one Departed* :—

1. 1. Mary amid the cares—the woes *S. L. M.*
For 'mid the earnest cares and woes *G. M.*
1. 2. *That crowd*] crowding *S. L. M.*
1. 3. *Drear*] Sad *S. L. M.*; *G. M.*
1. 7. *bland*] sweet *S. L. M.*
1. 8. *And thus*] Seraph *G. M.*
1. 11. Some lake beset as lake can be *S. L. M.*
throbbing far and free] vexed as it may be *G. M.*

SONNET—SILENCE. (PAGE 45.)

Readings of *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1840.

1. 2. *which thus is*] life aptly
1. 3. *A*] The

THE CONQUEROR WORM. (PAGE 46.)

Readings of *Graham's Magazine*, January 1843.

1. 3. *An angel*] A mystic
1. 13. *formless*] shadowy
1. 31. *seraphs*] the angels; and in '1845'.
1. 34. *quivering*] dying
1. 37. *angels*] seraphs. *pallid*] haggard

THE HAUNTED PALACE. (PAGE 48.)

Readings of the *Baltimore Museum*, April 1839.

1. 4. *Radiant*] Snow-white
1. 17. *Wanderers*] All wanderers
1. 24. *ruler*] sovereign

SCENES FROM POLITIAN. (PAGE 53.)

Readings of *Southern Literary Messenger*, December 1835 and January 1836 :—

1. 170. *This sacred*] A vow—a
1. 189. *Surely*] I live
1. 240. *eloquent*] voice—that
1. 246. *it*] that lattice
1. 285. *Believe me*] Baldazzar! Oh!
1. 305. *sob*] weep
1. 306. *mourn*] weep
1. 309. *turn here thine eyes*] and listen to me
1. 412. *Paradisal Hope*] hopes—give me to live

l. 449. *At the Vatican*] Insert after this line :—

If that we meet at all it were as well
That I should meet him in the Vatican—
In the Vatican—with the holy walls
Of the Vatican.

l. 463. *then at once*] —have at thee then

l. 467. *thy sacred*] hold off thy

l. 468. *indeed, I dare not*] I dare not, dare not

l. 470. Insert after this line :—

Exceeding well ! thou darest not fight with me.

l. 475. Insert after this line :—Thou darest not.

l. 476. *my lord*] alas

l. 478. *the veriest*] —I am—a

l. 497. *thou liest*] By God

indeed] now this

SONNET—TO SCIENCE. (PAGE 81.)

Readings of '1829' and of '1831'—

l. 1. *true*] meet 1829; 1831

l. 12. The gentle Naiad from her fountain flood, 1829

l. 14. *tamarind tree*] shrubbery 1831

AL AARAAF. (PAGE 82.)

In the 1831 text, the first fifteen lines are replaced by—

Mysterious star !

Thou wert my dream

All a long summer night—

Be now my theme !

By this clear stream,

Of thee will I write ;

Meantime from afar

Bathe me in light !

Thy world has not the dross of ours,

Yet all the beauty—all the flowers

That list our love, or deck our bowers

In dreamy gardens, where do lie

Dreamy maidens all the day,

While the silver wings of Circassy

On violet couches faint away.

Little—oh ! little dwells in thee

Like unto what on Earth we see :

Beauty's eye is here the bluest

In the falsest and untrust—

On the sweetest air doth float
 The most sad and solemn note—
 If with thee be broken hearts,
 Joy so peacefully departs,
 That its echo still doth dwell,
 Like the murmur in the shell.
 Thou ! thy truest type of grief
 Is the gently falling leaf—
 Thou ! thy framing is so holy
 Sorrow is not melancholy.

Other Readings of '1829' and '1831':—

- 1. 11. *Oh,*] With 1829
- 1. 19. *An oasis]* A garden-spot 1829; 1831
- 1. 43. *reared]* rear 1831
- 1. 95. Omit *red* 1831
- 1. 128. *All]* Here 1829; 1831
- 1. 191. *peerèd]* ventured 1829
- 1. 257. *lead]* hang 1829, 1831
- 1. 355. *the orb of Earth]* one constant star 1829; 1831
- 1. 371. *he]* it 1829; 1831

TAMERLANE. (PAGE 100.)

Poe's 'Notes' to the Poem not reprinted in 1845 are given below with '1827' text.

Readings of 1831:—

- 1. 3. *deem]* think
- 1. 26. Insert after this line:—
 Despair, the fabled vampire-bat,
 Hath long upon my bosom sat,
 And I would rave, but that he flings
 A calm from his unearthly wings.
- 1. 30. Omit *fierce*
- 1. 57. Was giant-like—so thou my mind .
- 1. 73. *this iron heart]* that as infinite
- 1. 74. My soul—so was the weakness in it.

Insert after the above line:—

For in those days it was my lot
 To haunt of the wide world a spot
 The which I could not love the less.
 So lovely was the loneliness
 Of a wild lake with black rock bound,
 And the sultan-like pines that tower'd around !

But when the night had thrown her pall
 Upon that spot as upon all,
 And the black wind murmur'd by,
 In a dirge of melody ;
 My infant spirit would awake
 To the terror of that lone lake.
 Yet that terror was not fright—
 But a tremulous delight—
 A feeling not the jewell'd mine
 Could ever bribe me to define,
 Nor love, Ada ! tho' it were thine.
 How could I from that water bring
 Solace to my imagining ?
 My solitary soul—how make
 An Eden of that dim lake ?

But then a gentler, calmer spell
 Like moonlight on my spirit fell,
 But O ! I have no words to tell.

- l. 106. *throw me on her throbbing*] lean upon her gentle
 ll. 112-15. Omit these lines.
 l. 119. *its joy—its little lot*] of pleasure or
 l. 120. *That was new pleasure*] The good, the bad
 ll. 128-38. Omit these lines.
 l. 151. *on her bright*] upon her
 l. 152. *to become*] fitted for
 ll. 166-77. Say, holy father, breathes there yet
 A rebel or a Bajazet ?
 How now ! Why tremble, man of gloom,
 As if my words were the Simoom !
 Why do the people bow the knee,
 To the young Tamerlane—to me !
- l. 202. *splendour*] beauty
 ll. 213-21. I reached my home—what home ? above
 My home, my hope—my early love
 Lonely, like me, the desert rose,
 Bow'd down with its own glory grows.
- l. 235. *unpolluted*] undefined
 l. 243. Insert after this line :—
 If my peace hath flown away
 In a night—or in a day—
 In a vision—or in none—
 Is it therefore, the less gone ?

I was standing 'mid the roar
 Of a wind-beaten shore,
 And I held within my hand
 Some particles of sand—
 How bright! and yet to creep
 Thro' my fingers to the deep!
 My early hopes? no—they
 Went gloriously away,
 Like lightning from the sky—
 Why in the battle did not I?

See also 1827 text and notes thereon.

A DREAM. (PAGE 108.)

Readings of '1827':—

Insert before line 1:—

A wilder'd being from my birth,
 My spirit spurn'd control,
 But now, abroad on the wide earth,
 Where wanderest thou, my soul?

l. 13. *storm and]* misty

l. 14. *trembled from]* dimly shone

ROMANCE. (PAGE 109.)

In the Philadelphia *Saturday Museum*, March 4, 1843, line 14 reads:—

I scarcely have had time for cares.

See also *Introduction* and notes thereon.

FAIRY-LAND. (PAGE 110.)

See text of 1831 and notes thereon.

TO —. (PAGE 112.)

(The bowers whereat, in dreams, I see)

Readings of '1829':—

l. 11. Omit *the*

l. 12. *baubles]* trifles

TO THE RIVER —. (PAGE 113.)

Readings of '1829', and of the Wilmer MS.:—

l. 2. *crystal, wandering]* labyrinth like 1829; *MS.*

l. 10. *Her worshipper]* Thy pretty self *MS.*

l. 12. *deeply]* lightly *MS.*

l. 14. *Of her soul-searching]* The scrutiny of her, 1829; *MS.*

THE LAKE—TO —. (PAGE 114.)

Compare *Tamerlane*, '1831'; and see also 1827 text and notes thereon.

SONG. (PAGE 115.)

Readings of '1827', of '1829', and of the Wilmer MS. :—

1. 6. Of young passion free 1827
1. 7. *aching*] chained 1827: fetter'd 1829
1. 8. *could*] might 1827
11. 5–8. Omit these lines MS.
1. 9. *perhaps*] I ween 1827

TO HELEN. (PAGE 116.)

Readings of '1831' and of *Southern Literary Messenger*, March 1836 :—

1. 9. *glory that was*] beauty of fair
1. 10. *that was*] of old
1. 11. *yon brilliant*] that little
1. 13. *agate lamp*] folded scroll

ANNABEL LEE. (PAGE 122.)

The *Southern Literary Messenger*, November 1849, has 'side of the' for sounding, line 41.

THE BELLS. (PAGE 124.)

See *The Bells* 'First Draft' and notes thereon.

ULALUME. (PAGE 129.)

The *American Whig Review*, December 1847, prints this, with some very slight variations, and an additional (tenth) verse :—

Said we, then—the two, then—'Ah, can it
 Have been that the woodlandish ghouls
 The pitiful, the merciless ghouls—
 To bar up our way and to ban it
 From the secret that lies in the wolds—
 From the thing that lies hidden in these wolds—
 Had drawn up the spectre of a planet
 From the limbo of lunary souls
 This sinfully scintillant planet
 From the Hell of the planetary souls.'

TO HELEN. (PAGE 133.)

The *Union Magazine*, Nov. 1848, omits *O Heaven! . . . thee and me*, ll. 26–28.

TO — —. (PAGE 136.)

See *To Marie Louise*.

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM. (PAGE 142.)

See versions of 1827 and of 1829.

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD: VISIT OF THE DEAD. (PAGE 147.)

1. 17. *fever*] Emendation by Mr. Shepherd, original has ‘*ferver*’.
1. 24. *mist*] Mr. Ingram’s substitution for ‘*wish*’.

THE VALLEY OF UNREST: THE VALLEY NIS. (PAGE 148.)

Readings of *Southern Literary Messenger*, February 1836.

1. 6. *Far away*] One and all, too

1. 24. *the*] tall

ll. 27–46. Now each visitor shall confess
 Nothing there is motionless :
 Nothing save the airs that brood
 O'er the enchanted solitude,
 Save the airs with pinions furled
 That slumber o'er that valley-world.
 No wind in Heaven, and lo ! the trees
 Do roll like seas, in Northern breeze,
 Around the stormy Hebrides—
 No wind in Heaven, and clouds do fly,
 Rustling everlasting,
 Through the terror-stricken sky,
 Rolling, like a waterfall,
 O'er the horizon's fiery wall—
 And Helen, like thy human eye,
 Low crouched on earth, some violets lie,
 And, nearer Heaven, some lilies wave
 All banner like, above a grave.
 And one by one, from out their tops
 Eternal dews come down in drops,
 Ah, one by one, from off their stems
 Eternal dews come down in gems !

THE SLEEPER : IRENE. (PAGE 150.)

Readings of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, May 1836 :—

ll. 1-2. I stand beneath the soaring moon
At midnight in the month of June.

ll. 3-8. Omit.

1. 18. *bright pines*] cedars

1. 20. *reels with bliss*] nodding hangs

1. 21. Above yon cataract of Serangs.

1. 25. And hark the sounds so low yet clear
(Like music of another sphere)
Which steal within the slumberer's ear
Or so appear—or so appear !

ll. 37-40. That o'er the floor, and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall—
Then for thine own all radiant sake,
Lady, awake ! awake ! awake !

ll. 41-59. Omit.

LENORE : A PAEAN. (PAGE 153.)

Readings of *Southern Literary Messenger*, January 1836 :—

1. 8. *Dead*] Her

1. 26. *perfum'd there*] motionless

1. 28. *her hair*] each tress

ll. 29-32. Omit these lines.

ll. 33-4. In June she died—in June
Of life—beloved, and fair

1. 38. *Thy life and love are*] Helen, thy soul is

1. 39. *untainted*] all-hallowed

ISRAFEL : 1831 TEXT. (PAGE 157.)

Readings of *Southern Literary Messenger*, August 1836, and of *Graham's Magazine*, October 1841 :—

1. 15. *owing to*] due unto G. M.

1. 21. Omit *S. L. M.* ; *G. M.*

1. 43. *While a stormier*] And a loftier *S. L. M.* ; *G. M.*

THE CITY IN THE SEA : THE DOOMED CITY. (PAGE 159.)

Readings of *Southern Literary Messenger*, August 1836 :—

The poem is here called 'The City of Sin'.

ll. 14-19. Omit.

1. 20. No holy rays from heaven come down

1. 22. But light from out the lurid sea

1. 55. *Hell, rising*] All Hades

TAMERLANE: 1827 TEXT. (PAGE 161.)

Readings of the original text, treated as errata in 1884 reprint:—

- I. 25. *hated*] hatred
- I. 71. *sleep*] steep
- I. 152. *Dwelt*] Dwell
- I. 190. *were*] wore. Mr. Ingram.
- I. 350. *too well*] to well. Mr. Ingram.
- I. 371. *list*] lisp

Readings of Wilmer MSS.:—

- I. 91. *breathing*] more than
- I. 144. Such as I taught her from the time
- II. 150-2. There were no holier thoughts than thine
- I. 164. *Which I felt not*] Unheeded then
- II. 182-8. Omit.
- I. 189. *me at this time*] for now on me
- I. 190. Truth flashes thro' eternity
- I. 193. *knows*] feels
- I. 219. *own fair*] magic
- II. 221-3. Encircling with a glittering bound
 Of diamond sunshine and sweet spray
 Two mossy huts of the Taglay.
- II. 245-6. The undying hope which now opprest
 A spirit ne'er to be at rest.
- I. 247. *secret*] silent
- I. 250. *led*] thrown
- I. 251. *Astray from reason*] Her mantle over
- I. 252. *Ambition*] Lion Ambition : omit *nor fed*

Insert after this line:—

And crouches to a keeper's hand.

- I. 254. *beautiful*] terrible
- I. 332. *proudly*] nobly
- I. 334. *earth hath seen*] people saw
- II. 335-7. Striding o'er empires haughtily,
 A diademed outlaw
 More than the Zinghis in his fame.
- I. 338. *what*] even
- I. 342. *the dying*] their parting
- I. 346. *Nothing have I*] And I have naught

A ROMANCE: INTRODUCTION. (PAGE 177.)

Readings of '1829':—

- II. 11-34. Omit.

- I. 35. *O, then the]* Of late
 I. 36. *shook the very Heavens]* shake the very air
 I. 38. I hardly had time for cares
 I. 44. *half fear'd]* would feel
 II. 46–66. Omit.

FAIRY-LAND : 1831 TEXT. (PAGE 180.)

Readings of '1829' :—

II. 1–40. Omit.

I. 45 *see]* there

I. 51. About twelve by the moon-dial.
 One, more *filmy* than the rest
 [A sort which, upon trial,
 They have found to be the best]
 Comes down—still down—and down.

II. 54–63. While its wide circumference
 In easy drapery falls
 Over hamlets, and rich halls,
 Wherever they may be—
 O'er the strange woods—o'er the sea—
 Over spirits on the wing—
 Over every drowsy thing—
 And buries them up quite
 In a labyrinth of light—
 And then, how deep ! O ! deep !
 Is the passion of their sleep !
 In the morning they arise,
 And their moony covering
 Is soaring in the skies,
 With the tempests as they toss,
 Like—almost anything—
 Or a yellow Albatross.

They use that moon no more
 For the same end as before—
 Videlicet a tent—
 Which I think extravagant :
 Its atomies, however,
 Into a shower dissever,
 Of which those butterflies,
 Of Earth, who seek the skies

And so come down again
[The unbelieving things !]
Have brought a specimen
Upon their quivering wings.

THE LAKE: 1827 TEXT. (PAGE 183.)

Readings of '1829' and of the Wilmer MS.:-

1. 9. *wind would pass me by*] black wind murmured by 1829
1. 10. *In its stillly*] In a dirge of 1829
1. 11. *infant*] boyish MS.
- ll. 15-16. A feeling not the jewell'd mine
Should ever bribe me to define—
Nor Love—although the Love be thine. 1829.
1. 20. *dark*] lone 1829; MS.
1. 21. Whose solitary soul could make 1829; MS.

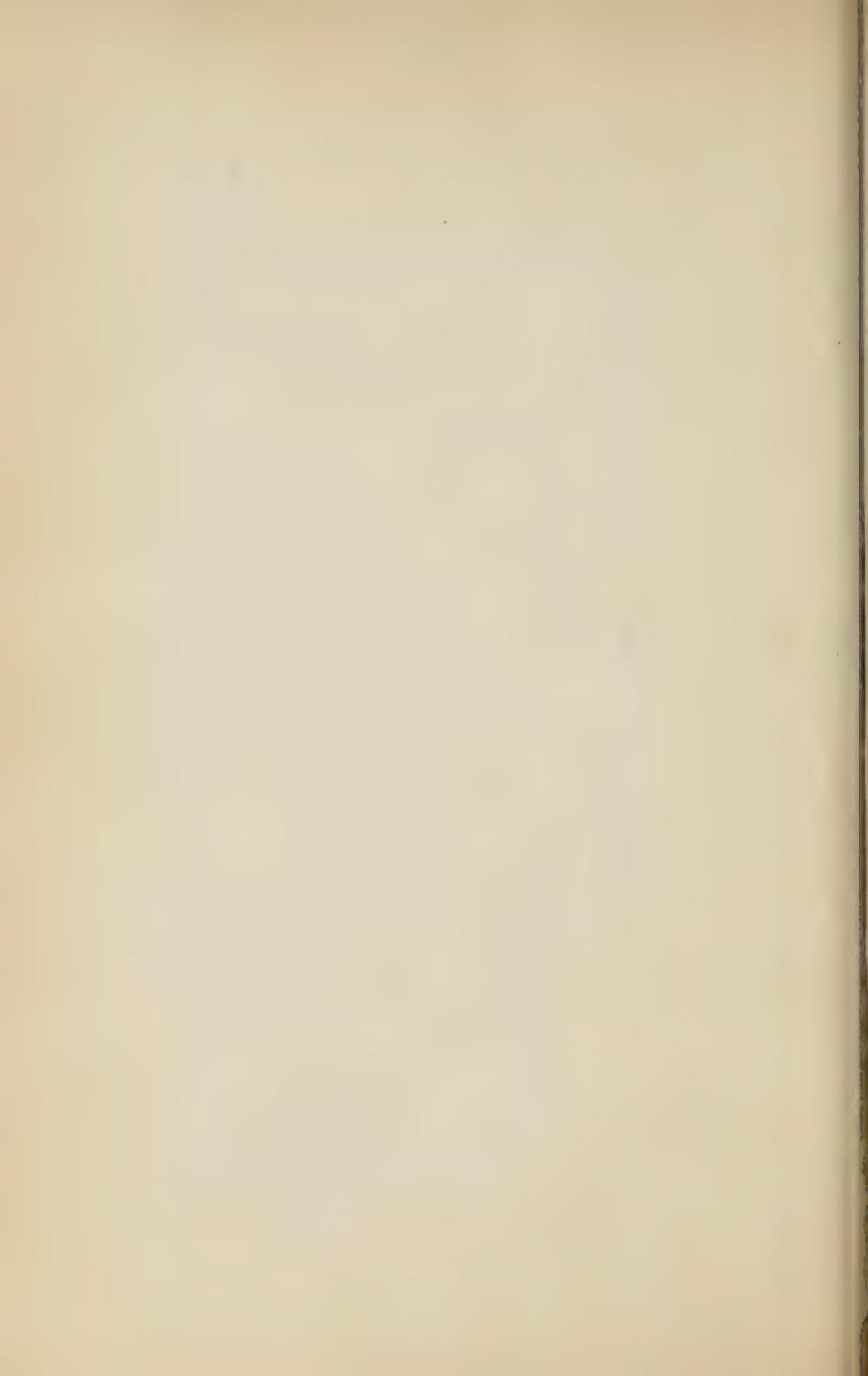
A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM. 1827, 1st ed. (PAGE 188.)

1. 18. *sigh*] Mr. Ingram's emendation for 'sight'.
“

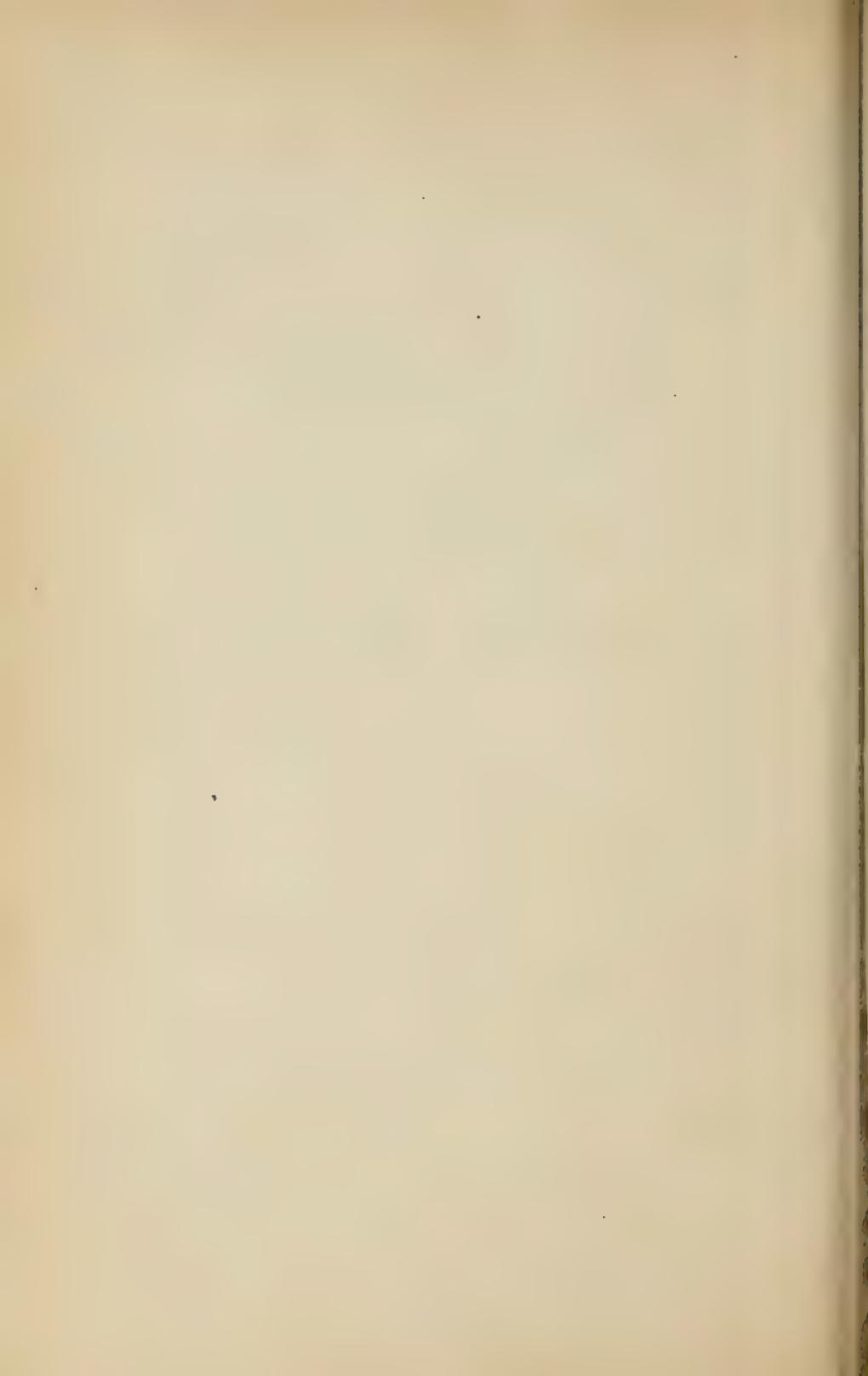
INDEX TO FIRST LINES

	PAGE
A dark unfathom'd tide	188
Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown for- ever	31, 155
At midnight, in the month of June	27
At morn—at noon—at twilight dim	33
Because I feel that, in the Heavens above	141
Beloved! amid the earnest woes	44
By a route obscure and lonely	36
Dim vales—and shadowy floods	110
Fair isle, that from the fairest of all flowers	38
Fair river! in thy bright, clear flow	113
Far away—far away	148
For her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes . . .	121
From childhood's hour I have not been	143
Gaily bedight	128
Hear the sledges with the bells	124
Helen, thy beauty is to me	116
How shall the burial rite be read?	153
I dwelt alone	42
I have sent for thee, holy friar	161
I saw thee once—once only—years ago	123
I saw thee on thy bridal day	115
In Heaven a spirit doth dwell	34, 157
In spring of youth it was my lot	114
In the greenest of our valleys	48
In visions of the dark night	108
In youth have I known one with whom the Earth . . .	4
In youth's spring it was my lot	183
It was many and many a year ago	122
Kind solace in a dying hour!	100

	PAGE
Lo ! Death has reared himself a throne	39, 159
Lo ! 'tis a gala night.	46
Not long ago, the writer of these lines	136, 186
O ! I care not that my earthly lot	11
O ! nothing earthly save the ray	82
Of all who hail thy presence as the morning	119
Oh, that my young life were a lasting dream !	7
Once it smiled, a silent dell	24
Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary	17
Romance, who loves to nod and sing	109, 177
Science ! true daughter of Old Time thou art	81
'Seldom we find,' says Solomon Don Dunce	120
Should my early life seem	189
Sit down beside me, Isabel	180
Take this kiss upon the brow !	142
Thank Heaven ! the crisis	137
The Bells!—hear the bells !	184
The bowers whereat, in dreams, I see	112
The happiest day, the happiest hour	3
The ring is on my hand	25
The skies they were ashen and sober	129
There are some qualities—some incorporate things	45
Thou art sad, Castiglione	53
Thou wast all that to me, love	41
Thou wouldst be loved ?—then let thy heart	43
Thy soul shall find itself alone	9, 147
'Tis now (so sings the soaring moon)	150
Twas noontide of summer	6
Type of the antique Rome ! Rich reliquary	29



THE POETIC PRINCIPLE



THE POETIC PRINCIPLE

IN speaking of the Poetic Principle, I have no design to be either thorough or profound. While discussing, very much at random, the essentiality of what we call Poetry, my principal purpose will be to cite for consideration, some few of those minor English or American poems which best suit my own taste, or which, upon my own fancy, have left the most definite impression. By ‘minor poems’ I mean, of course, poems of little length. And here, in the beginning, permit me to say a few words in regard to a somewhat peculiar principle, which, whether rightfully or wrongfully, has always had its influence in my own critical estimate of the poem. I hold that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase, ‘a long poem,’ is simply a flat contradiction in terms.

I need scarcely observe that a poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul. The value of the poem is in the ratio of this elevating excitement. But all excitements are, through a psychal necessity, transient. That degree of excitement which would entitle a poem to be so called at all, cannot be sustained throughout a composition of any great length. After the lapse of half an hour, at the very utmost, it flags—fails—a revulsion ensues—and then the poem is, in effect, and in fact, no longer such.

There are, no doubt, many who have found difficulty in reconciling the critical dictum that the ‘Paradise

'Lost' is to be devoutly admired throughout, with the absolute impossibility of maintaining for it, during perusal, the amount of enthusiasm which that critical dictum would demand. This great work, in fact, is to be regarded as poetical, only when, losing sight of that vital requisite in all works of Art, Unity, we view it merely as a series of minor poems. If, to preserve its Unity—its totality of effect or impression—we read it (as would be necessary) at a single sitting, the result is but a constant alternation of excitement and depression. After a passage of what we feel to be true poetry, there follows, inevitably, a passage of platitude which no critical pre-judgment can force us to admire ; but if, upon completing the work, we read it again ; omitting the first book—that is to say, commencing with the second—we shall be surprised at now finding that admirable which we before condemned—that damnable which we had previously so much admired. It follows from all this that the ultimate, aggregate, or absolute effect of even the best epic under the sun, is a nullity :—and this is precisely the fact.

In regard to the Iliad, we have, if not positive proof, at least very good reason, for believing it intended as a series of lyrics ; but, granting the epic intention, I can say only that the work is based in an imperfect sense of Art. The modern epic is, of the supposititious ancient model, but an inconsiderate and blindfold imitation. But the day of these artistic anomalies is over. If, at any time, any very long poem were popular in reality--which I doubt—it is at least clear that no very long poem will ever be popular again.

That the extent of a poetical work is, *ceteris paribus*, the measure of its merit, seems undoubtedly, when we thus state it, a proposition sufficiently absurd—yet

we are indebted for it to the quarterly Reviews. Surely there can be nothing in mere *size*, abstractly considered—there can be nothing in mere *bulk*, so far as a volume is concerned, which has so continuously elicited admiration from these saturnine pamphlets! A mountain, to be sure, by the mere sentiment of physical magnitude which it conveys, *does* impress us with a sense of the sublime—but no man is impressed after *this* fashion by the material grandeur of even ‘The Columbiad’. Even the Quarterlies have not instructed us to be so impressed by it. *As yet*, they have not insisted on our estimating Lamartine by the cubic foot, or Pollock by the pound—but what else are we to *infer* from their continual prating about ‘sustained effort’? If, by ‘sustained effort’, any little gentleman has accomplished an epic, let us frankly commend him for the effort—if this indeed be a thing commendable,—but let us forbear praising the epic on the effort’s account. It is to be hoped that common-sense, in the time to come, will prefer deciding upon a work of Art, rather by the impression it makes—by the effect it produces—than by the time it took to impress the effect, or by the amount of ‘sustained effort’ which had been found necessary in effecting the impression. The fact is, that perseverance is one thing and genius quite another—nor can all the Quarterlies in Christendom confound them. By-and-by, this proposition, with many which I have been just urging, will be received as self-evident. In the meantime, by being generally condemned as falsities, they will not be essentially damaged as truths.

On the other hand, it is clear that a poem may be improperly brief. Undue brevity degenerates into mere epigrammatism. A *very* short poem, while now and then producing a brilliant or vivid, never produces

a profound or enduring effect. There must be the steady pressing down of the stamp upon the wax. De Béranger has wrought innumerable things, pungent and spirit-stirring ; but, in general, they have been too imponderous to stamp themselves deeply into the public attention ; and thus, as so many feathers of fancy, have been blown aloft only to be whistled down the wind.

A remarkable instance of the effect of undue brevity in depressing a poem—in keeping it out of the popular view—is afforded by the following exquisite little Serenade :

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright.
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Has led me—who knows how?—
To thy chamber-window, sweet !

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream ;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
Oh, beloved as thou art !

Oh, lift me from the grass !
I die, I faint, I fail !
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas !
My heart beats loud and fast ;
Oh, press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last !

Very few, perhaps, are familiar with these lines—yet no less a poet than Shelley is their author. Their warm, yet delicate and ethereal imagination will be appreciated by all—but by none so thoroughly as by him who has himself arisen from sweet dreams of one beloved, to bathe in the aromatic air of a southern midsummer night.

One of the finest poems by Willis—the very best, in my opinion, which he has ever written—has, no doubt, through this same defect of undue brevity, been kept back from its proper position, not less in the critical than in the popular view.

The shadows lay along Broadway,

'T was near the twilight-tide—

And slowly there a lady fair

Was walking in her pride.

Alone walk'd she; but, viewlessly,

Walk'd spirits at her side.

Peace charm'd the street beneath her feet,

And Honour charm'd the air;

And all astir looked kind on her,

And call'd her good as fair—

For all God ever gave to her,

She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare

From lovers warm and true—

For her heart was cold to all but gold,

And the rich came not to woo—

But honoured well are charms to sell

If priests the selling do.

Now walking there was one more fair—

A slight girl, lily-pale;

And she had unseen company

To make the spirit quail—

'Twixt Want and Scorn she walk'd forlorn.

And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray ;
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way !—
But the sin forgiven by Christ in Heaven
By man is cursed alway !

In this composition we find it difficult to recognize the Willis who has written so many mere 'verses of society'. The lines are not only richly ideal, but full of energy; while they breathe an earnestness—an evident sincerity of sentiment—for which we look in vain throughout all the other works of this author.

While the epic mania—while the idea that, to merit in poetry, prolixity is indispensable—has, for some years past, been gradually dying out of the public mind, by mere dint of its own absurdity, we find it succeeded by a heresy too palpably false to be long tolerated, but one which, in the brief period it has already endured, may be said to have accomplished more in the corruption of our Poetical Literature than all its other enemies combined. I allude to the heresy of *The Didactic*. It has been assumed, tacitly and avowedly, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate object of all Poetry is Truth. Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral; and by this moral is the poetical merit of the work to be adjudged. We Americans especially have patronized this happy idea; and we Bostonians, very especially, have developed it in full. We have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be to confess ourselves radically wanting in the true Poetic dignity and force:—but the simple fact is, that, would we but permit ourselves to look into our own souls, we should immediately there discover that under the sun there

neither exists nor *can* exist any work more thoroughly dignified—more supremely noble than this very poem—this poem *per se*—this poem which is a poem and nothing more—this poem written solely for the poem's sake.

With as deep a reverence for the True as ever inspired the bosom of man, I would, nevertheless, limit, in some measure, its modes of inculcation. I would limit to enforce them. I would not enfeeble them by dissipation. The demands of Truth are severe. She has no sympathy with the myrtles. All *that* which is so indispensable in Song, is precisely all *that* with which *she* has nothing whatever to do. It is but making her a flaunting paradox, to wreath her in gems and flowers. In enforcing a truth, we need severity rather than efflorescence of language. We must be simple, precise, terse. We must be cool, calm, unimpassioned. In a word, we must be in that mood which, as nearly as possible, is the exact converse of the poetical. *He* must be blind indeed who does not perceive the radical and chasmal differences between the truthful and the poetical modes of inculcation. He must be theory-mad beyond redemption who, in spite of these differences, shall still persist in attempting to reconcile the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and Truth.

Dividing the world of mind into its three most immediately obvious distinctions, we have the Pure Intellect, Taste, and the Moral Sense. I place Taste in the middle, because it is just this position which, in the mind, it occupies. It holds intimate relations with either extreme ; but from the Moral Sense is separated by so faint a difference that Aristotle has not hesitated to place some of its operations among the virtues themselves. Nevertheless, we find the *offices* of the

trio marked with a sufficient distinction. Just as the intellect concerns itself with Truth, so Taste informs us of the Beautiful, while the Moral Sense is regardful of Duty. Of this latter, while Conscience teaches the obligation, and Reason the expediency, Taste contents herself with displaying the charms:—waging war upon Vice solely on the ground of her deformity—her disproportion—her animosity to the fitting, to the appropriate, to the harmonious—in a word, to Beauty.

An immortal instinct, deep within the spirit of man, is thus, plainly, a sense of the Beautiful. This it is which administers to his delight in the manifold forms, and sounds, and odours, and sentiments amid which he exists. And just as the lily is repeated in the lake, or the eyes of Amaryllis in the mirror, so is the mere oral or written repetition of these forms, and sounds, and colours, and odours, and sentiments, a duplicate source of delight. But this mere repetition is not poetry. He who shall simply sing, with however glowing enthusiasm, or with however vivid a truth of description, of the sights, and sounds, and odours, and colours, and sentiments, which greet *him* in common with all mankind—he, I say, has yet failed to prove his divine title. There is still a something in the distance which he has been unable to attain. We have still a thirst unquenchable, to allay which he has not shown us the crystal springs. This thirst belongs to the immortality of Man. It is at once a consequence and an indication of his perennial existence. It is the desire of the moth for the star. It is no mere appreciation of the Beauty before us—but a wild effort to reach the Beauty above. Inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle, by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of Time, to attain a portion of

that Loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to eternity alone. And thus when by Poetry—or when by Music, the most entrancing of the Poetic moods—we find ourselves melted into tears—not as the Abbâte Gravia supposes—through excess of pleasure, but through a certain, petulant, impatient sorrow at our inability to grasp *now*, wholly, here on earth, at once and forever, those divine and rapturous joys, of which *through* the poem, or *through* the music, we attain to but brief and indeterminate glimpses.

The struggle to apprehend the supernal Loveliness—this struggle, on the part of souls fittingly constituted—has given to the world all *that* which it (the world) has ever been enabled at once to understand and *to feel* as poetic.

The Poetic Sentiment, of course, may develop itself in various modes—in Painting, in Sculpture, in Architecture, in the Dance—very especially in Music,—and very peculiarly, and with a wide field, in the composition of the Landscape Garden. Our present theme, however, has regard only to its manifestation in words. And here let me speak briefly on the topic of rhythm. Contenting myself with the certainty that Music, in its various modes of metre, rhythm, and rhyme, is of so vast a moment in Poetry as never to be wisely rejected—is so vitally important an adjunct, that he is simply silly who declines its assistance, I will not now pause to maintain its absolute essentiality. It is in Music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the Poetic Sentiment, it struggles—the creation of supernal Beauty. It *may* be, indeed, that here this sublime end is, now and then, attained *in fact*. We are often made to feel, with a shivering delight, that from an earthly harp are stricken notes which *cannot* have

been unfamiliar to the angels. And thus there can be little doubt that in the union of Poetry with Music in its popular sense, we shall find the widest field for the Poetic development. The old Bards and Minnesingers had advantages which we do not possess—and Thomas Moore, singing his own songs, was, in the most legitimate manner, perfecting them as poems.

To recapitulate, then :—I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as *The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty*. Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the Intellect or with the Conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth.

A few words, however, in explanation. *That* pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contemplation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty we alone find it possible to attain that pleasurable elevation, or excitement, *of the soul*, which we recognize as the Poetic Sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the Heart. I make Beauty, therefore,—using the word as inclusive of the sublime,—I make Beauty the province of the poem, simply because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring as directly as possible from their causes:—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation in question is at least *most readily* attainable in the poem. It by no means follows, however, that the incitements of Passion, or the precepts of Duty, or even the lessons of Truth, may not be introduced into a poem, and with advantage; for they may subserve, incidentally, in various ways, the general purposes of the work:—but the true artist will always

contrive to tone them down in proper subjection to that *Beauty* which is the atmosphere and the real essence of the poem.

I cannot better introduce the few poems which I shall present for your consideration, than by the citation of the Proem to Mr. Longfellow's 'Waif':

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an Eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me,
That my soul cannot resist;

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavour;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who through long days of labour,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

With no great range of imagination, these lines have been justly admired for their delicacy of expression. Some of the images are very effective. Nothing can be better than—

————— the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of time.

The idea of the last quatrain is also very effective. The poem, on the whole, however, is chiefly to be admired for the graceful *insouciance* of its metre, so well in accordance with the character of the sentiments, and especially for the *ease* of the general manner. This 'ease', or naturalness, in a literary style, it has long been the fashion to regard as ease in appearance alone—as a point of really difficult attainment. But not so—a natural manner is difficult only to him who should never meddle with it—to the unnatural. It is but the result of writing with the understanding, or with the

instinct, that *the tone*, in composition, should always be that which the mass of mankind would adopt—and must perpetually vary, of course, with the occasion. The author who, after the fashion of the *North American Review*, should be, upon *all* occasions, merely ‘quiet’, must necessarily, upon *many* occasions, be simply silly, or stupid; and has no more right to be considered ‘easy’, or ‘natural’, than a Cockney exquisite, or than the sleeping Beauty in the wax-works.

Among the minor poems of Bryant, none has so much impressed me as the one which he entitles ‘June’. I quote only a portion of it :

There, through the long, long summer hours,
The golden light should lie,
And thick, young herbs and groups of flowers
Stand in their beauty by.

The oriole should build and tell
His love-tale, close beside my cell;
The idle butterfly
Should rest him there, and there be heard
The housewife-bee and humming-bird.

And what, if cheerful shouts, at noon,
Come, from the village sent,
Or songs of maids, beneath the moon,
With fairy laughter blent?

And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothed lovers walk in sight
Of my low monument?
I would the lovely scene around

Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

I know that I no more should see
The season’s glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me,
Nor its wild music flow;
But if, around my place of sleep,

The friends I love should come to weep,
 They might not haste to go.
 Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom
 Should keep them, lingering by my tomb.

These to their soften'd hearts should bear
 The thought of what has been,
 And speak of one who cannot share
 The gladness of the scene;
 Whose part in all the pomp that fills
 The circuit of the summer hills,
 Is—that his grave is green;
 And deeply would their hearts rejoice
 To hear again his living voice.

The rhythmical flow, here, is even voluptuous—nothing could be more melodious. The poem has always affected me in a remarkable manner. The intense melancholy which seems to well up, perforce, to the surface of all the poet's cheerful sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul—while there is the truest poetic elevation in the thrill. The impression left is one of a pleasurable sadness. And if, in the remaining compositions which I shall introduce to you, there be more or less of a similar tone always apparent, let me remind you that (how or why we know not) this certain taint of sadness is inseparably connected with all the higher manifestations of true Beauty. It is, nevertheless,

A feeling of sadness and longing,
 That is not akin to pain,
 And resembles sorrow only
 As the mist resembles the rain.

The taint of which I speak is clearly perceptible even in a poem so full of brilliancy and spirit as the 'Health' of Edward C. Pinkney:

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements
And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
'T is less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own,
Like those of morning birds,
And something more than melody
Dwells ever in her words:
The coinage of her heart are they,
And from her lips each flows
As one may see the burden'd bee
Forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her,
The measures of her hours;
Her feelings have the fragrancy,
The freshness of young flowers;
And lovely passions, changing oft,
So fill her, she appears
The image of themselves by turns,—
The idol of past years!

Of her bright face one glance will trace
A picture on the brain,
And of her voice in echoing hearts
A sound must long remain;
But memory, such as mine of her,
So very much endears,
When death is nigh my latest sigh
Will not be life's, but hers.

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon—

Her health! and would on earth there stood
Some more of such a frame,
That life might be all poetry,
And weariness a name.

It was the misfortune of Mr. Pinkney to have been born too far south. Had he been a New Englander, it is probable that he would have been ranked as the first of American lyrists, by that magnanimous cabal which has so long controlled the destinies of American Letters, in conducting the thing called the *North American Review*. The poem just cited is especially beautiful; but the poetic elevation which it induces, we must refer chiefly to our sympathy in the poet's enthusiasm. We pardon his hyperboles for the evident earnestness with which they are uttered.

It is by no means my design, however, to expatiate upon the *merits* of what I should read you. These will necessarily speak for themselves. Boccalini, in his 'Advertisements from Parnassus', tells us that Zoilus once presented Apollo a very caustic criticism upon a very admirable book—whereupon the god asked him for the beauties of the work. He replied that he only busied himself about the errors. On hearing this, Apollo, handing him a sack of unwinnowed wheat, bade him pick out *all the chaff* for his reward.

Now that fable answers very well as a hit at the critics—but I am by no means sure that the god was in the right. I am by no means certain that the true limits of the critical duty are not grossly misunderstood. Excellence, in a poem especially, may be considered in the light of an axiom, which need only be properly *put* to become self-evident. It is *not* excellence if it requires to be demonstrated as such:—and thus, to point out too particularly the merits of a work of Art, is to admit that they are *not* merits altogether.

Among the ‘Melodies’ of Thomas Moore, is one whose distinguished character as a poem proper seems to have been singularly left out of view. I allude to his lines beginning : ‘Come, rest in this bosom’. The intense energy of their expression is not surpassed by any thing in Byron. There are two of the lines in which a sentiment is conveyed that embodies the *all in all* of the divine passion of Love—a sentiment which, perhaps, has found its echo in more, and in more passionate, human hearts than any other single sentiment ever embodied in words :

Come, rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer,
Though the herd have fled from thee, thy home is still
here ;
Here still is the smile that no cloud can o’ercast,
And a heart and a hand all thy own to the last.

Oh ! what was love made for, if ’t is not the same
Through joy and through torment, through glory and
shame ?

I know not, I ask not, if guilt’s in that heart,
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

Thou hast call’d me thy Angel in moments of bliss,
And thy Angel I ’ll be, ’mid the horrors of this,—
Through the furnace, unshrinking, thy steps to pursue,
And shield thee, and save thee,—or perish there too !

It has been the fashion, of late days, to deny Moore Imagination, while granting him Fancy—a distinction originating with Coleridge—than whom no man more fully comprehended the great powers of Moore. The fact is, that the fancy of this poet so far predominates over all his other faculties, and over the fancy of all other men, as to have induced, very naturally, the idea that he is fanciful *only*. But never was there a greater mistake. Never was a grosser wrong done the fame of a true poet. In the compass of the English language

I can call to mind no poem more profoundly, more weirdly *imaginative*, in the best sense, than the lines commencing: ‘I would I were by that dim lake,’ which are the composition of Thomas Moore. I regret that I am unable to remember them.

One of the noblest—and, speaking of Fancy, one of the most singularly fanciful—of modern poets, was Thomas Hood. His ‘Fair Ines’ had always, for me, an inexpressible charm :—

Oh ! saw ye not fair Ines ?
She ’s gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
And rob the world of rest :
She took our daylight with her,
The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek,
And pearls upon her breast.

Oh ! turn again, fair Ines,
Before the fall of night,
For fear the moon should shine alone,
And stars unrivall’d bright ;
And blessed will the lover be
That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
I dare not even write !

Would I had been, fair Ines,
That gallant cavalier,
Who rode so gaily by thy side,
And whisper’d thee so near !
Were there no bonny dames at home,
Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
The dearest of the dear ?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
And banners waved before ;

And gentle youth and maidens gay,
And snowy plumes they wore;
It would have been a beauteous dream,
—If it had been no more!

Alas, alas, fair Ines!
She went away with song,
With Music waiting on her steps,
And shoutings of the throng;
But some were sad and felt no mirth,
But only Music's wrong,
In sounds that sang Farewell, Farewell,
To her you've loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines,
That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before.
Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore!
The smile that blessed one lover's heart
Has broken many more.

'The Haunted House', by the same author, is one of the truest poems ever written—one of the *truest*—one of the most unexceptionable—one of the most thoroughly artistic, both in its theme and in its execution. It is, moreover, powerfully ideal—imaginative. I regret that its length renders it unsuitable for the purposes of this Lecture. In place of it, permit me to offer the universally appreciated 'Bridge of Sighs'.

One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now, is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonour,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily.

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home?

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!

Oh, it was pitiful !
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly
Feelings had changed :
Love, by harsh evidence
Thrown from its eminence ;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver ;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river :
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurl'd—
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world !

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute man !
Lave in it, drink of it
Then, if you can !

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care ;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair !

Ere her limbs frigidly
 Stiffen too rigidly,
 Decently,—kindly,—
 Smooth, and compose them ;
 And her eyes, close them,
 Staring so blindly !

Dreadfully staring
 Through muddy impurity,
 As when with the daring
 Last look of despairing
 Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
 Spurred by contumely,
 Cold inhumanity,
 Burning insanity,
 Into her rest.—
 Cross her hands humbly,
 As if praying dumbly,
 Over her breast !

Owning her weakness,
 Her evil behaviour,
 And leaving, with meekness,
 Her sins to her Saviour !

The vigour of this poem is no less remarkable than its pathos. The versification, although carrying the fanciful to the very verge of the fantastic, is nevertheless admirably adapted to the wild insanity which is the thesis of the poem.

Among the minor poems of Lord Byron, is one which has never received from the critics the praise which it undoubtedly deserves :

Though the day of my destiny's over,
 And the star of my fate hath declined,
 Thy soft heart refused to discover
 The faults which so many could find;

Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when nature around me is smiling,
The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling,
Because it reminds me of thine ;
And when winds are at war with the ocean,
As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion,
It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is shivered,
And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is delivered
To pain—it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me ;
They may crush, but they shall not contemn ;
They may torture, but shall not subdue me ;
'T is of *thee* that I think—not of them.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me ;
Though woman, thou didst not forsake ;
Though loved, thou foreborest to grieve me ;
Though slandered, thou never couldst shake ;
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me ;
Though parted, it was not to fly ;
Though watchful, 't was not to defame me ;
Nor mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one—
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
'T was folly not sooner to shun :
And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of *thee*.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perished,
 Thus much I at least may recall :
 It hath taught me that which I most cherished
 Deserved to be dearest of all.
 In the desert a fountain is springing,
 In the wide waste there still is a tree,
 And a bird in the solitude singing,
 Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

Although the rhythm, here, is one of the most difficult, the versification could scarcely be improved. No nobler *theme* ever engaged the pen of poet. It is the soul-elevating idea, that no man can consider himself entitled to complain of Fate while, in his adversity, he still retains the unwavering love of woman.

From Alfred Tennyson—although in perfect sincerity I regard him as the noblest poet that ever lived—I have left myself time to cite only a very brief specimen. I call him, and *think* him the noblest of poets—not because the impressions he produces are, at *all* times, the most profound—not because the poetical excitement which he induces is, at *all* times, the most intense—but because it *is*, at all times, the most ethereal—in other words, the most elevating and the most pure. No poet is so little of the earth, earthy. What I am about to read is from his last long poem, ‘The Princess’:

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
 In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,
 Sad as the last which reddens over one
 That sinks with all we love below the verge ;
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more !

Thus, although in a very cursory and imperfect manner, I have endeavoured to convey to you my conception of the Poetic Principle. It has been my purpose to suggest that, while this Principle itself is, strictly and simply, the Human Aspiration for Supernal Beauty, the manifestation of the Principle is always found in an elevating excitement of the Soul—quite independent of that passion which is the intoxication of the Heart—or of that Truth which is the satisfaction of the Reason. For, in regard to Passion, alas ! its tendency is to degrade, rather than to elevate the Soul. Love, on the contrary—Love—the true, the divine Eros—the Uranian, as distinguished from the Dionæan Venus—is unquestionably the purest and truest of all poetical themes. And in regard to Truth—if, to be sure, through the attainment of a truth, we are led to perceive a harmony where none was apparent before, we experience, at once, the true poetical effect—but this effect is referable to the harmony alone, and not in the least degree to the truth which merely served to render the harmony manifest.

We shall reach, however, more immediately a distinct conception of what the true Poetry is, by mere reference to a few of the simple elements which induce in the Poet himself the true poetical effect. He

recognizes the ambrosia which nourishes his soul, in the bright orbs that shine in Heaven—in the volutes of the flower—in the clustering of low shrubberies—in the waving of the grain-fields—in the slanting of tall, Eastern trees—in the blue distance of mountains—in the grouping of clouds—in the twinkling of half-hidden brooks—in the gleaming of silver rivers—in the repose of sequestered lakes—in the star-mirroring depths of lonely wells. He perceives it in the songs of birds—in the harp of Æolus—in the sighing of the night-wind—in the repining voice of the forest—in the surf that complains to the shore—in the fresh breath of the woods—in the scent of the violet—in the voluptuous perfume of the hyacinth—in the suggestive odour that comes to him, at eventide, from far-distant, undiscovered islands, over dim oceans, illimitable and unexplored. He owns it in all noble thoughts—in all unworldly motives—in all holy impulses—in all chivalrous, generous, and self-sacrificing deeds. He feels it in the beauty of woman—in the grace of her step—in the lustre of her eye—in the melody of her voice—in her soft laughter—in her sigh—in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in her winning endearments—in her burning enthusiasms—in her gentle charities—in her meek and devotional endurance—but above all—ah, far above all—he kneels to it—he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty—of her love.

Let me conclude by the recitation of yet another brief poem—one very different in character from any that I have before quoted. It is by Motherwell, and is called ‘The Song of the Cavalier’. With our modern and altogether rational ideas of the absurdity and impiety of warfare, we are not precisely in that frame of mind best adapted to sympathize with the sentiments, and thus

to appreciate the real excellence, of the poem. To do this fully, we must identify ourselves, in fancy, with the soul of the old cavalier.

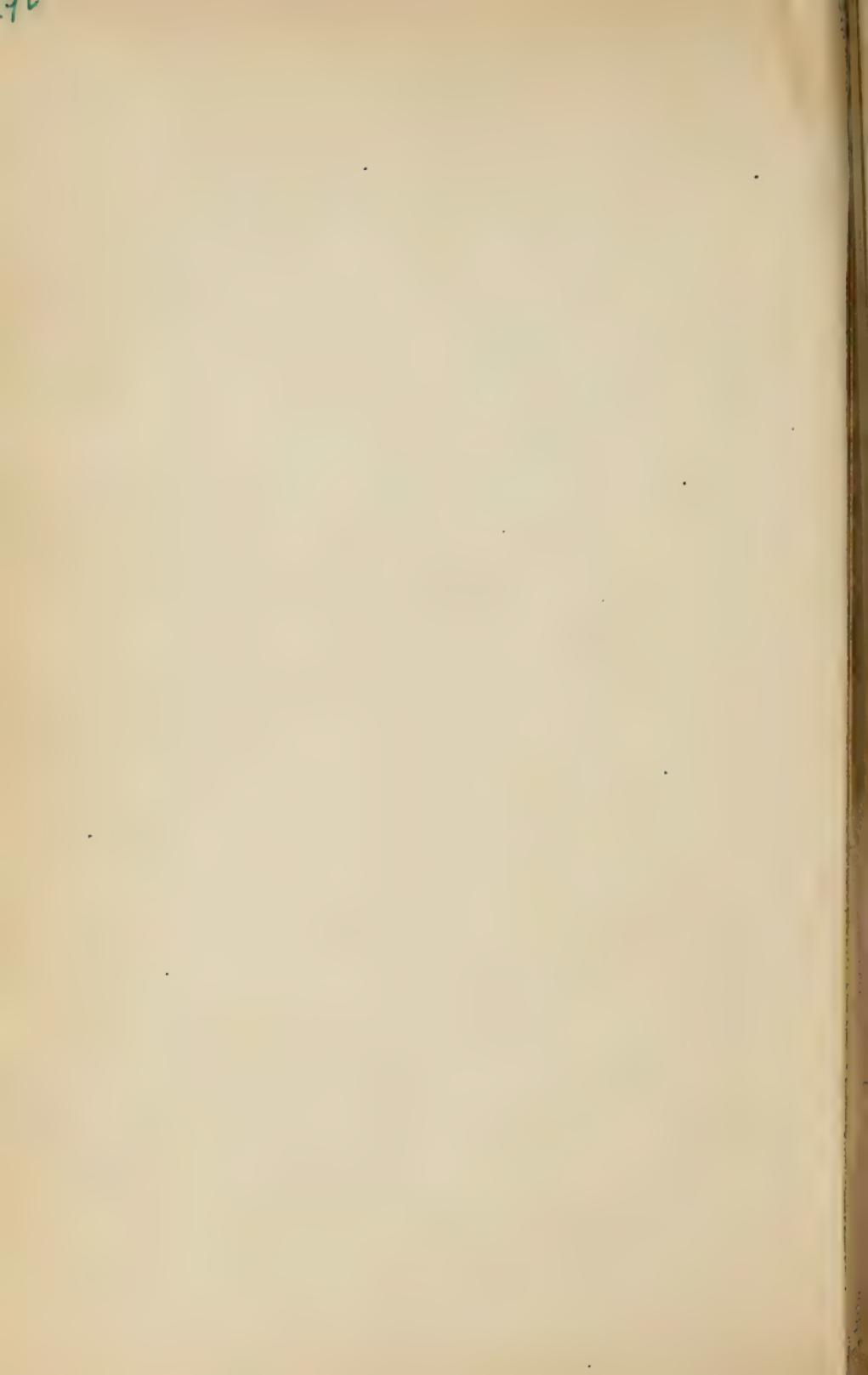
Then mounte ! then mounte, brave gallants, all,
And don your helmes amaine :
Deathe's couriers, Fame and Honour, call
Us to the field againe.

No shrewish teares shall fill our eye
When the sword-hilt 's in our hand ;
Heart-whole we 'll part and no whit sighe
For the fayrest of the land ;
Let piping swaine, and craven wight,
Thus weepe and puling crye,
Our business is like men to fight,
And hero-like to die !

THE
PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION

POE

R



THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION

CHARLES DICKENS, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of ‘Barnaby Rudge’, says : ‘By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his “Caleb Williams” backward ? He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done.’

I cannot think this the *precise* mode of procedure on the part of Godwin—and indeed what he himself acknowledges is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens’ idea ; but the author of ‘Caleb Williams’ was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its *dénouement* before any thing be attempted with the pen. It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis—or one is suggested by an incident of the day—or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative—designing, generally, to fill

in with description, dialogue, or authorial comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

1. I prefer commencing with the consideration of an effect. Keeping originality *always* in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest—I say to myself, in the first place : ‘Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?’ Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone—whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone—afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

2. I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would—that is to say, who could—detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say—but, perhaps, the authorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers—poets in especial—prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition—and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought—at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view—at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanage-

able—at the cautious selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene-shifting—the step-ladders and demon-traps, the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary *histrio*.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pellmell, are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor, at any time, the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions ; and, since the interest of an analysis, or reconstruction, such as I have considered a *desideratum*, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analysed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the *modus operandi* by which some one of my own works was put together. I select 'The Raven' as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition—that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem *per se*, the circumstance—or say the necessity—which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of composing a poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression—for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and every thing like totality is at once destroyed. But since, *ceteris paribus*, no poet can afford to dispense with *any thing* that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones—that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a physical necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one-half of the ‘Paradise Lost’ is essentially prose—a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions—the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity, of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art—the limit of a single sitting—and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as ‘Robinson Crusoe’, (demanding no unity), this limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit—in other words, to the excitement or elevation—again, in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in

direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect:—this, with one proviso—that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical, taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper *length* for my intended poem, a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed; and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration—the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect—they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul*—not of intellect, or of heart—upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating ‘the beautiful’. Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes—that objects should be attained through means best adapted

for their attainment—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to, is *most readily* attained in the poem. Now the object, Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable, to a certain extent, in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a *homeliness* (the truly passionate will comprehend me), which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul. It by no means follows from any thing here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem—for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast—but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the *tone* of its highest manifestation—and all experience has shown that this tone is tone of sadness. Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem—some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects—or more properly

points, in the theatrical sense—I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the *refrain*. The universality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the *refrain*, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone—both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity—of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation of the application of the *refrain*—the *refrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the *nature* of my *refrain*. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the *refrain* itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence, would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best *refrain*.

The question now arose as to the *character* of the word. Having made up my mind to a *refrain*, the division of the poem into stanzas was, of course, a corollary: the *refrain* forming the close to each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt; and these considerations inevitably

led me to the long *o* as the most sonorous vowel, in connection with *r* as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word 'Nevermore'. In fact, it was the very first which presented itself.

The next *desideratum* was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word 'Nevermore'. In observing the difficulty which I at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the pre-assumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by *a human* being—I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a *non-reasoning* creature capable of speech; and, very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a Raven, as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended *tone*.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven—the bird of ill omen—monotonously repeating the one word, 'Nevermore', at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object *supremeness*, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself: 'Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the *universal* understanding of mankind, is the *most* melancholy?' Death—was the obvious reply. 'And when,' I said, 'is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?'

From what I have already explained at some length, the answer, here also, is obvious—‘When it most closely allies itself to *Beauty*: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world—and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover.’

I had now to combine the two ideas, of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word ‘Nevermore’. I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying, at every turn, the *application* of the word repeated; but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending—that is to say, the effect of the *variation of application*. I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover—the first query to which the Raven should reply ‘Nevermore’—that I could make this first query a commonplace one—the second less so—the third still less, and so on—until at length the lover, startled from his original *nonchalance* by the melancholy character of the word itself—by its frequent repetition—and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it—is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character—queries whose solution he has passionately at heart—propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture—propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which, reason assures him, is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote), but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure

in so modelling his questions as to receive from the *expected* ‘Nevermore’ the most delicious, because the most intolerable, of sorrow. Perceiving the opportunity thus afforded me—or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction—I first established in mind the climax, or concluding query—that query to which ‘Nevermore’ should be in the last place an answer—that query in reply to which this word ‘Nevermore’ should involve the utmost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here, then, the poem may be said to have its beginning—at the end, where all works of art should begin—for it was here, at this point of my preconsiderations, that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza :

‘Prophet,’ said I, ‘thing of evil! prophet still if bird or devil!
 By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore,
 Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if within the distant Aidenn,
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.’

Quoth the raven ‘Nevermore’.

I composed this stanza, at this point, first that, by establishing the climax, I might the better vary and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover—and, secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the metre, and the length and general arrangement of the stanza—as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede, so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able, in the subsequent composition, to con-

struct more vigorous stanzas, I should, without scruple, have purposely enfeebled them, so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.

And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected, in versification, is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere *rhythm*, it is still clear that the possible varieties of metre and stanza are absolutely infinite—and yet, *for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing*. The fact is, that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition. In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and although a positive merit of the highest class, demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

Of course, I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or metre of the ‘Raven’. The former is trochaic—the latter is octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the *refrain* of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic. Less pedantically—the feet employed throughout (trochees) consist of a long syllable followed by a short: the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet—the second of seven and a half (in effect two-thirds)—the third of eight—the fourth of seven and a half—the fifth the same—the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines, taken individually, has been employed before, and what originality the ‘Raven’ has, is in their *combination into stanza*; nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual, and some altogether novel

effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the Raven—and the first branch of this consideration was the *locale*. For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields—but it has always appeared to me that a close *circumscription of space* is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident:—it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber—in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished—this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.

The *locale* being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird—and the thought of introducing him through the window, was inevitable. The idea of making the lover suppose, in the first instance, that the flapping of the wings of the bird against the shutter, is a ‘tapping’ at the door, originated in a wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader’s curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover’s throwing open the door, finding all dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked.

I made the night tempestuous, first, to account for the Raven’s seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber.

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage—it being understood that the bust was absolutely *suggested* by the bird—the bust of *Pallas* being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and, secondly, for the sonorousness of the word, *Pallas*, itself.

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast, with a view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic—approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible—is given to the Raven's entrance. He comes in ‘with many a flirt and flutter’.

Not the least obeisance made he—not a moment stopped
or stayed he,
But with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber
door.

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out :—

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
'Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,' I said, 'art
sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the
nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian
shore?'
Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore'.

Much I marvelled *this ungainly fowl* to hear discourse so
plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore ;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as 'Nevermore'.

The effect of the *dénouement* being thus provided for, I immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most profound seriousness:—this tone commencing in the stanza directly following the one last quoted, with the line,

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only, etc.

From this epoch the lover no longer jests—no longer sees any thing even of the fantastic in the Raven's demeanor. He speaks of him as a 'grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore', and feels the 'fiery eyes' burning into his 'bosom's core'. This revolution of thought, or fancy, on the lover's part, is intended to induce a similar one on the part of the reader—to bring the mind into a proper frame for the *dénouement* which is now brought about as rapidly and as *directly* as possible.

With the *dénouement* proper—with the Raven's reply, 'Nevermore', to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world—the poem, in its obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, every thing is within the limits of the accountable—of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word 'Nevermore', and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm, to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams—the chamber-window of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming of a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of a bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat out of the immediate reach of the student, who, amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's de-

meanor, demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven, addressed, answers with its customary word, ‘Nevermore’—a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the student, who, giving utterance aloud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl’s repetition of ‘Nevermore’. The student now guesses the state of the case, but is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer ‘Nevermore’. With the indulgence, to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration, in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination, and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skilfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness or nakedness, which repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required —first, some amount of complexity, or more properly, adaptation; and, secondly, some amount of suggestiveness—some under-current, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that *richness* (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term) which we are too fond of confounding with *the ideal*. It is the *excess* of the suggested meaning—it is the rendering this the upper instead of the under-current of the theme—which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem—their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which has preceded

THE
SYMBOLIST
TOOK
THA
UP QU

them. The under-current of meaning is rendered first apparent in the lines—

‘Take thy beak from out *my heart*, and take thy form from off my door!’

Quoth the Raven ‘Nevermore! ’

It will be observed that the words, ‘from out my heart,’ involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with answer, ‘Nevermore,’ dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the Raven as emblematical—but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza, that the intention of making him emblematical of *Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance* is permitted distinctly to be seen :

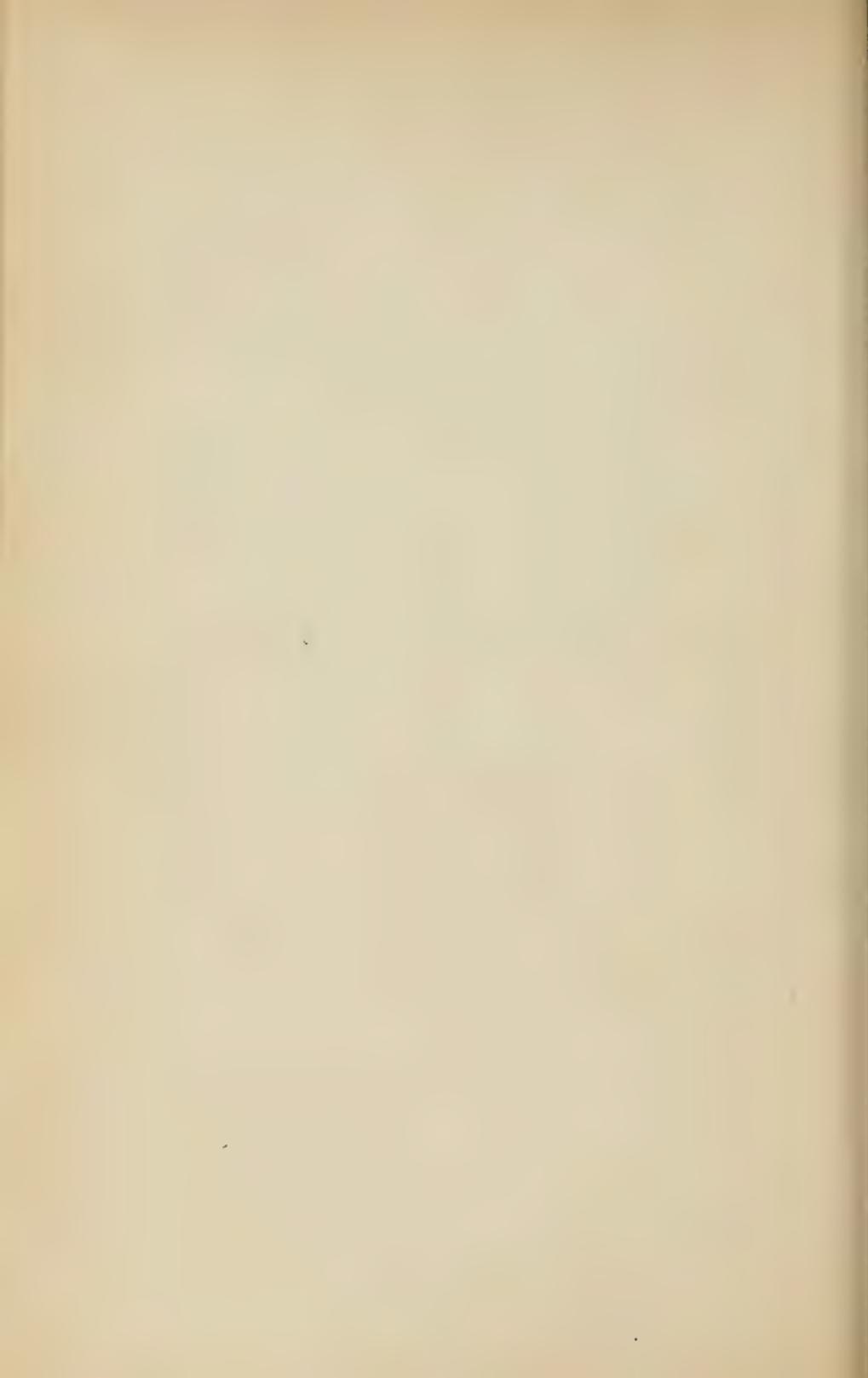
And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is
dreaming,

And the lamplight o’er him streaming throws his shadow
on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on
the floor

Shall be lifted—nevermore.

THE RATIONALE OF VERSE



THE RATIONALE OF VERSE

THE word ‘Verse’ is here used not in its strict or primitive sense, but as the term most convenient for expressing generally and without pedantry all that is involved in the consideration of rhythm, rhyme, metre, and versification.

There is, perhaps, no topic in polite literature which has been more pertinaciously discussed, and there is certainly not one about which so much inaccuracy, confusion, misconception, misrepresentation, mystification, and downright ignorance on all sides, can be fairly said to exist. Were the topic really difficult, or did it lie, even, in the cloud-land of metaphysics, where the doubt-vapors may be made to assume any and every shape at the will or at the fancy of the gazer, we should have less reason to wonder at all this contradiction and perplexity ; but in fact the subject is exceedingly simple ; one-tenth of it, possibly, may be called ethical ; nine-tenths, however, appertain to mathematics ; and the whole is included within the limits of the commonest common-sense.

‘But, if this is the case, how,’ it will be asked, ‘can so much misunderstanding have arisen ? Is it conceivable that a thousand profound scholars, investigating so very simple a matter for centuries, have not been able to place it in the fullest light, at least, of which it is susceptible ?’ These queries, I confess, are not easily answered :—at all events, a satisfactory reply to them might cost more trouble, than would,

if properly considered, the whole *verata quaestio* to which they have reference. Nevertheless, there is little difficulty or danger in suggesting that the ‘thousand profound scholars’ *may* have failed, first, because they were scholars, secondly, because they were profound, and thirdly, because they were a thousand—the impotency of the scholarship and profundity having been thus multiplied a thousand-fold. I am serious in these suggestions; for, first again, there is something in ‘scholarship’ which seduces us into blind worship of Bacon’s Idol of the Theatre—into irrational deference to antiquity; secondly, the proper ‘profoundity’ is rarely profound—it is the nature of truth in general, as of some ores in particular, to be richest when most superficial; thirdly, the clearest subject may be overclouded by mere superabundance of talk. In chemistry, the best way of separating two bodies is to add a third; in speculation, fact often agrees with fact and argument with argument, until an additional well-meaning fact or argument sets every thing by the ears. In one case out of a hundred a point is excessively discussed because it is obscure; in the ninety-nine remaining it is obscure because excessively discussed. When a topic is thus circumstanced, the readiest mode of investigating it is to forget that any previous investigation has been attempted.

But, in fact, while much has been written on the Greek and Latin rhythms, and even on the Hebrew, little effort has been made at examining that of any of the modern tongues. As regards the English, comparatively nothing has been done. It may be said, indeed, that we are without a treatise on our own verse. In our ordinary grammars and in our works on rhetoric or prosody in general, may be

found occasional chapters, it is true, which have the heading ‘Versification’, but these are, in all instances, exceedingly meagre. They pretend to no analysis; they propose nothing like system; they make no attempt at even rule; every thing depends upon ‘authority’. They are confined, in fact, to mere exemplification of the supposed varieties of English feet and English lines;—although in no work with which I am acquainted are these feet correctly given or these lines detailed in any thing like their full extent. Yet what has been mentioned is all—if we except the occasional introduction of some pedagogueism, such as this, borrowed from the Greek Prosodies: ‘When a syllable is wanting, the verse is said to be catalectic; when the measure is exact, the line is acatalectic; when there is a redundant syllable it forms hypermeter.’ Now whether a line be termed catalectic or acatalectic is, perhaps, a point of no vital importance; it is even possible that the student may be able to decide, promptly, when the *a* should be employed and when omitted, yet be incognizant, at the same time, of *all* that is worth knowing in regard to the structure of verse.

A leading defect in each of our treatises (if treatises they can be called), is the confining the subject to mere *Versification*, while *Verse* in general, with the understanding given to the term in the heading of this paper, is the real question at issue. Nor am I aware of even one of our grammars which so much as properly defines the word *versification* itself. ‘*Versification*,’ says a work now before me, of which the accuracy is far more than usual—the ‘English Grammar’ of Goold Brown,—‘*Versification* is the art of arranging words into lines of correspondent length, so as to produce harmony by the regular alternation

of syllables differing in quantity.' The commencement of this definition might apply, indeed, to the *art* of versification, but not versification itself. Versification is not the art of arranging, etc., but the actual arranging—a distinction too obvious to need comment. The error here is identical with one which has been too long permitted to disgrace the initial page of every one of our school grammars. I allude to the definitions of English grammar itself. 'English grammar,' it is said, 'is the art of speaking and writing the English language correctly.' This phraseology, or something essentially similar, is employed, I believe, by Bacon, Miller, Fisk, Greenleaf, Ingersoll, Kirkland, Cooper, Flint, Pue, Comly, and many others. These gentlemen, it is presumed, adopted it without examination from Murray, who derived it from Lily (whose work was '*quam solam Regia Majestas in omnibus scholis docendam praeccipit*'), and who appropriated it without acknowledgment, but with some unimportant modification, from the Latin Grammar of Leonicenus. It may be shown, however, that this definition, so complacently received, is not, and cannot be, a proper definition of English grammar. A definition is that which so describes its object as to distinguish it from all others; it is no definition of any one thing if its terms are applicable to any one other. But if it be asked: 'What is the design—the end—the aim of English grammar?' our obvious answer is: 'The art of speaking and writing the English language correctly,'—that is to say, we must use the precise words employed as the definition of English grammar itself. But the object to be attained by any means is, assuredly, not the means. English grammar and the end contemplated by English grammar are two matters sufficiently distinct; nor can

the one be more reasonably regarded as the other than a fishing-hook as a fish. The definition, therefore, which is applicable in the latter instance, *cannot*, in the former, be true. Grammar in general is the analysis of language ; English Grammar of the English.

But to return to Versification as defined in our extract above. ‘It is the art,’ says the extract, ‘of arranging words into lines of correspondent length.’ Not so ; a correspondence in the length of lines is by no means essential. Pindaric odes are, surely, instances of versification, yet these compositions are noted for extreme diversity in the length of their lines.

The arrangement is, moreover, said to be for the purpose of producing ‘*harmony* by the regular alternation’, etc. But *harmony* is not the sole aim—not even the principal one. In the construction of verse, *melody* should never be left out of view ; yet this is a point which all our prosodies have most unaccountably forborne to touch. Reasoned rules on this topic should form a portion of all systems of rhythm.

‘So as to produce harmony,’ says the definition, ‘by the *regular alternation*,’ etc. A *regular* alternation, as described, forms no part of any principle of versification. The arrangement of spondees and dactyls, for example, in the Greek hexameter, is an arrangement which may be termed *at random*. At least it is arbitrary. Without interference with the line as a whole, a dactyl may be substituted for a spondee, or the converse, at any point other than the ultimate and penultimate feet, of which the former is always a spondee, the latter nearly always a dactyl. Here, it is clear, we have no ‘*regular alternation* of syllables differing in quantity’.

'So as to produce harmony,' proceeds the definition, 'by the regular alternation of *syllables differing in quantity*,'—in other words, by the alternation of long and short syllables; for in rhythm all syllables are necessarily either short or long. But not only do I deny the necessity of any *regularity* in the succession of feet and, by consequence, of syllables, but dispute the essentiality of any *alternation*, regular or irregular, of syllables long and short. Our author, observe, is now engaged in a definition of versification in general, not of English versification in particular. But the Greek and Latin metres abound in the spondee and pyrrhic—the former consisting of two long syllables, the latter of two short; and there are innumerable instances of the immediate succession of many spondees and many pyrrhics.

Here is a passage from Silius Italicus :

Fallis te, mensas inter quod credis inermem
 Tot bellis quaesita viro, tot caedibus armat
 Majestas eterna ducem: si admoveris ora
 Cannas, et Trebium ante oculos, Trasymenaque busta,
 Et Pauli stare ingentem miraberis umbram.

Making the elisions demanded by the classic prosodies, we should scan these hexameters thus :

Fāllīs | tē mēn | sās īn | tēr qūod | crēdis īn | ērmēm |
 Tōt bēl | līs qūae | sītā vī | rō tōt | caedibūs | ārmāt |
 Mājēs | tās ē | tērnā dū | cēm s'ād | mōvčris | ōrā |
 Cānnās | ēt Trēbī' | ānt' ōcū | lōs Trāsŷ | mēnāqñē | būstā |
 Et Pāu | li stā | r' īngēn | tēm mī | rābērīs | ūmbrām

It will be seen that, in the first and last of these lines, we have only two short syllables in thirteen, with an uninterrupted succession of no less than nine long syllables. But how are we to reconcile all this with a definition of versification which describes it as

'the art of arranging words into lines of correspondence-length so as to produce harmony by the *regular alternation of syllables differing in quantity*'?

It may be urged, however, that our prosodist's *intention* was to speak of the English metres alone, and that, by omitting all mention of the spondee and pyrrhic, he has virtually avowed their exclusion from our rhythms. A grammarian is never excusable on the ground of good intentions. We demand from him, if from any one, rigorous precision of style. But grant the design. Let us admit that our author, following the example of all authors on English Prosody, has, in defining versification at large, intended a definition merely of the English. All these prosodists, we will say, reject the spondee and pyrrhic. Still all admit the iambus, which consists of a short syllable followed by a long; the trochee, which is the converse of the iambus; the dactyl, formed of one long syllable followed by two short; and the anapaest—two short succeeded by a long. The spondee is improperly rejected, as I shall presently show. The pyrrhic is rightfully dismissed. Its existence in either ancient or modern rhythm is purely chimerical, and the insisting on so perplexing a nonentity as a foot of *two short syllables*, affords, perhaps, the best evidence of the gross irrationality and subservience to authority which characterize our Prosody. In the meantime the acknowledged dactyl and anapaest are enough to sustain my proposition about the 'alternation,' etc., without reference to feet which are assumed to exist in the Greek and Latin metres alone: for an anapaest and a dactyl may meet in the same line; when, of course, we shall have an uninterrupted succession of four short syllables. The meeting of these two feet, to be sure, is an accident not contemplated in the

definition now discussed ; for this definition, in demanding a ‘regular alternation of syllables differing in quantity’, insists on a regular succession of similar feet. But here is an example :

Sīng tō mē | Isābēlle.

This is the opening line of a little ballad now before me, which proceeds in the same rhythm—a peculiarly beautiful one. More than all this : English lines are often well composed, entirely, of a regular succession of syllables *all of the same quantity*—the first lines, for instance, of the following quatrain by Arthur C. Coxe:

March ! march ! march !
Making sounds as they tread.
Ho ! ho ! how they step,
Going down to the dead !

The line italicized is formed of three caesuras. The caesura, of which I have much to say hereafter, is rejected by the English Prosodies and grossly misrepresented in the classic. It is a perfect foot—the most important in all verse—and consists of a single *long* syllable ; *but the length of this syllable varies*.

It has thus been made evident that there is *not one* point of the definition in question which does not involve an error. And for any thing more satisfactory or more intelligible we shall look in vain to any published treatise on the topic.

So general and so total a failure can be referred only to radical misconception. In fact the English Prosodists have blindly followed the pedants. These latter, like *les moutons de Panurge*, have been occupied in incessant tumbling into ditches, for the excellent reason that their leaders have so tumbled before. The

Iliad, being taken as a starting-point, was made to stand in stead of Nature and common-sense. Upon this poem, in place of facts and deduction from fact, or from natural law, were built systems of feet, metres, rhythms, rules,—rules that contradict each other every five minutes, and for nearly all of which there may be found twice as many exceptions as examples. If any one has a fancy to be thoroughly confounded—to see how far the infatuation of what is termed ‘classical scholarship’ can lead a book-worm in the manufacture of darkness out of sunshine, let him turn over, for a few moments, any of the German Greek prosodies. The only thing clearly made out in them is a very magnificent contempt for Liebnitz’ principle of ‘a sufficient reason’.

To divert attention from the real matter in hand by any farther reference to these works, is unnecessary, and would be weak. I cannot call to mind, at this moment, one essential particular of information that is to be gleaned from them ; and I will drop them here with merely this one observation : that, employing from among the numerous ‘ancient’ feet the spondee, the trochee, the iambus, the anapaest, the dactyl, and the caesura alone, I will engage to scan *correctly* any of the Horatian rhythms, or any true rhythm that human ingenuity can conceive. And this excess of chimerical feet is, perhaps, the very least of the scholastic supererogations. *Ex uno discere omnia.* The fact is that *Quantity* is a point in whose investigation the lumber of mere learning may be dispensed with, if ever in any. Its appreciation is universal. It appertains to no region, nor race, nor era in especial. To melody and to harmony the Greeks hearkened with ears precisely similar to those which we employ for similar purposes at present ; and

I should not be condemned for heresy in asserting that a pendulum at Athens would have vibrated much after the same fashion as does a pendulum in the city of Penn.

Verse originates in the human enjoyment of equality, fitness. To this enjoyment, also, all the moods of verse—rhythm, metre, stanza, rhyme, alliteration, the *refrain*, and other analogous effects—are to be referred. As there are some readers who habitually confound rhythm and metre, it may be as well here to say that the former concerns the *character* of feet (that is, the arrangements of syllables) while the latter has to do with the *number* of these feet. Thus, by ‘a dactylic *rhythm*’ we express a sequence of dactyls. By ‘a dactylic hexameter’ we imply a line or measure consisting of six of these dactyls.

To return to *equality*. Its idea embraces those of similarity, proportion, identity, repetition, and adaptation or fitness. It might not be very difficult to go even behind the idea of equality, and show both how and why it is that the human nature takes pleasure in it, but such an investigation would, for any purpose now in view, be supererogatory. It is sufficient that the *fact* is undeniable—the fact that man derives enjoyment from his perception of equality. Let us examine a crystal. We are at once interested by the equality between the sides and between the angles of one of its faces: the equality of the sides pleases us; that of the angles doubles the pleasure. On bringing to view a second face in all respects similar to the first, this pleasure seems to be squared; on bringing to view a third, it appears to be cubed, and so on. I have no doubt, indeed, that the delight experienced, if measurable, would be found to have exact mathematical relations such as I suggest; that

is to say, as far as a certain point, beyond which there would be a decrease in similar relations.

The perception of pleasure in the equality of *sounds* is the principle of *Music*. Unpractised ears can appreciate only simple equalities, such as are found in ballad airs. While comparing one simple sound with another they are too much occupied to be capable of comparing the equality subsisting between these two simple sounds, taken conjointly, and two other similar simple sounds taken conjointly. Practised ears, on the other hand, appreciate both equalities at the same instant—although it is absurd to suppose that both are *heard* at the same instant. One is heard and appreciated from itself: the other is heard by the memory; and the instant glides into and is confounded with the secondary, appreciation. Highly cultivated musical taste in this manner enjoys not only these double equalities, all appreciated at once, but takes pleasurable cognizance, through memory, of equalities the members of which occur at intervals so great that the uncultivated taste loses them altogether. That this latter can properly estimate or decide on the merits of what is called scientific music, is of course impossible. But scientific music has no claim to intrinsic excellence—it is fit for scientific ears alone. In its excess it is the triumph of the *physique* over the *morale* of music. The sentiment is overwhelmed by the sense. On the whole, the advocates of the simpler melody and harmony have infinitely the best of the argument; although there has been very little of real argument on the subject.

In *verse*, which cannot be better designated than as an inferior or less capable Music, there is, happily, little chance for perplexity. Its rigidly simple character not even Science—not even Pedantry can greatly pervert.

The rudiment of verse may, possibly, be found in the *spondee*. The very germ of a thought seeking satisfaction in equality of sound would result in the construction of words of two syllables, equally accented. In corroboration of this idea we find that spondees most abound in the most ancient tongues. The second step we can easily suppose to be the comparison, that is to say, the collocation, of two spondees—of two words composed each of a spondee. The third step would be the juxtaposition of three of these words. By this time the perception of monotone would induce farther consideration: and thus arises what Leigh Hunt so flounders in discussing under the title of ‘The *Principle* of Variety in Uniformity’. Of course there is no principle in the case—nor in maintaining it. The ‘Uniformity’ is the principle; the ‘Variety’ is but the principle’s natural safeguard from self-destruction by excess of self. ‘Uniformity,’ besides, is the very worst word that could have been chosen for the expression of the *general* idea at which it aims.

The perception of monotone having given rise to an attempt at its relief, the first thought in this new direction would be that of collating two or more words formed each of two syllables differently accented (that is to say, short and long) but having the same order in each word,—in other terms, of collating two or more iambuses, or two or more trochees. And here let me pause to assert that more pitiable nonsense has been written on the topic of *long* and *short* syllables than on any other subject under the sun. In general, a syllable is long or short, just as it is difficult or easy of enunciation. The *natural* long syllables are those encumbered—the *natural* short syllables are those *unencumbered*, with consonants; all the rest is mere artificiality and jargon. The Latin

Prosodies have a rule that ‘a vowel before two consonants is long’. This rule is deduced from ‘authority’—that is, from the observation that vowels so circumstanced, in the ancient poems, are always in syllables long by the laws of scansion. The philosophy of the rule is untouched, and lies simply in the physical difficulty of giving voice to such syllables—of performing the lingual evolutions necessary for their utterance. Of course, it is not the *vowel* that is long, (although the rule says so) but the syllable of which the vowel is a part. It will be seen that the length of a syllable, depending on the facility or difficulty of its enunciation, must have great variation in various syllables ; but for the purposes of verse we suppose a long syllable equal to two short ones:—and the natural deviation from this relativity we correct in perusal. The more closely our long syllables approach this relation with our short ones, the better, *ceteris paribus*, will be our verse: but if the relation does not exist of itself, we force it by emphasis, which can, of course, make any syllable as long as desired;—or, by an effort we can pronounce with unnatural brevity a syllable that is naturally too long. *Accented* syllables are of course always long—but, where unencumbered with consonants, must be classed among the *unnaturally* long. Mere custom has declared that we shall accent them—that is to say, dwell upon them ; but no inevitable lingual difficulty forces us to do so. In fine, every long syllable must of its own accord occupy in its utterance, or must be *made* to occupy, precisely the time demanded for two short ones. The only exception to this rule is found in the caesura—of which more anon.

The success of the experiment with the trochees or iambuses (the one would have suggested the other)

must have led to a trial of dactyls or anapaests—natural dactyls or anapaests—dactylic or anapaestic *words*. And now some degree of complexity has been attained. There is an appreciation, first, of the equality between the several dactyls, or anapaests, and, secondly, of that between the long syllable and the two short conjointly. But here it may be said that step after step would have been taken, in continuation of this routine, until all the feet of the Greek prosodies became exhausted. Not so; these remaining feet have no existence except in the brains of the scholars. It is needless to imagine men inventing these things, and folly to explain how and why they invented them, until it shall be first shown that they are actually invented. All other ‘feet’ than those which I have specified, are, if not impossible at first view, merely combinations of the specified; and, although this assertion is rigidly true, I will, to avoid misunderstanding, put it in a somewhat different shape. I will say, then, that at present I am aware of no *rhythm*—nor do I believe that any one can be constructed—which, in its last analysis, will not be found to consist altogether of the feet I have mentioned, either existing in their individual and obvious condition, or interwoven with each other in accordance with simple natural laws which I will endeavour to point out hereafter.

We have now gone so far as to suppose men constructing indefinite sequences of spondaic, iambic, trochaic, dactylic, or anapaestic words. In *extending* these sequences, they would be again arrested by the sense of monotony. A succession of spondees would immediately have displeased; one of iambuses or of trochees, on account of the variety included within the foot itself, would have taken longer to displease;

one of dactyls or anapaests, still longer; but even the last, if extended very far, must have become wearisome. The idea, first, of curtailing, and, secondly, of defining the length of, a sequence, would thus at once have arisen. Here then is the *line*, or verse proper¹. The principle of equality being constantly at the bottom of the whole process, lines would naturally be made, in the first instance, equal in the number of their feet; in the second instance, there would be variation in the mere number: one line would be twice as long as another; then one would be some less obvious multiple of another; then still less obvious proportions would be adopted;—nevertheless there would be *proportion*, that is to say, a phase of equality, still.

Lines being once introduced, the necessity of distinctly defining these lines *to the ear*, (as yet written verse does not exist,) would lead to a scrutiny of their capabilities *at their terminations*:—and now would spring up the idea of equality in sound between the final syllables—in other words, of *rhyme*. First, it would be used only in the iambic, anapaestic, and spondaic rhythms (granting that the latter had not been thrown aside, long since, on account of its tameness), because in these rhythms, the concluding syllable being long, could best sustain the necessary protraction of the voice. No great while could elapse, however, before the effect, found pleasant as well as useful, would be applied to the two remaining rhythms.

¹ Verse, from the Latin *vertere*, to turn, is so called on account of the turning or re-commencement of the series of feet. Thus a verse, strictly speaking, is a line. In this sense, however, I have preferred using the latter word alone; employing the former in the general acceptation given it in the heading of this paper.

But as the chief force of rhyme must lie in the accented syllable, the attempt to create rhyme at all in these two remaining rhythms, the trochaic and dactylic, would necessarily result in double and triple rhymes, such as *beauty* with *duty* (trochaic) and *beautiful* with *dutiful* (dactylic).

It must be observed, that in suggesting these processes, I assign them no date; nor do I even insist upon their order. Rhyme is supposed to be of modern origin, and were this proved, my positions remain untouched. I may say, however, in passing, that several instances of rhyme occur in the ‘Clouds’ of Aristophanes, and that the Roman poets occasionally employ it. There is an effective species of ancient rhyming which has never descended to the moderns: that in which the ultimate and penultimate syllables rhyme with each other. For example:

Parturiunt montes; nascetur *ridiculus mus.*

And again :

Litoreis ingens inventa sub *ilicibus sus.*

The terminations of Hebrew verse (as far as understood) show no signs of rhyme; but what thinking person can doubt that it did actually exist? That men have so obstinately and blindly insisted, *in general*, even up to the present day, in confining rhyme to the *ends* of lines, when its effect is even better applicable elsewhere, intimates, in my opinion, the sense of some *necessity* in the connection of the end with the rhyme,—hints that the origin of rhyme lay in a necessity which connected it with the end,—shows that neither mere accident nor mere fancy gave rise to the connection,—points, in a word, at the very necessity which I have suggested (that of some mode

of defining lines *to the ear*) as the true origin of rhyme. Admit this, and we throw the origin far back in the night of Time—beyond the origin of written verse.

But, to resume. The amount of complexity I have now supposed to be attained is very considerable. Various systems of equalization are appreciated at once (or nearly so) in their respective values and in the value of each system with reference to all the others. As our present *ultimatum* of complexity, we have arrived at triple-rhymed, natural-dactylic lines, existing proportionally as well as equally with regard to other triple-rhymed, natural-dactylic lines. For example :

Virginal Lilian, rigidly, humblily dutiful ;
Saintlily, lowlily,
Thrillingly, holily
Beautiful !

Here we appreciate, first, the absolute equality between the long syllable of each dactyl and the two short conjointly; secondly, the absolute equality between each dactyl and any other dactyl—in other words, among all the dactyls; thirdly, the absolute equality between the two middle lines; fourthly, the absolute equality between the first line and the three others taken conjointly; fifthly, the absolute equality between the last two syllables of the respective words ‘dutiful’ and ‘beautiful’; sixthly, the absolute equality between the two last syllables of the respective words ‘lowlily’ and ‘holily’; seventhly, the proximate equality between the first syllable of ‘dutiful’ and the first syllable of ‘beautiful’; eighthly, the proximate equality between the first syllable of ‘lowlily’ and that of ‘holily’; ninthly, the proportional equality (that of five to one) between

the first line and each of its members, the dactyls ; tenthly, the proportional equality (that of two to one,) between each of the middle lines and its members, the dactyls ; eleventhly, the proportional equality between the first line and each of the two middle—that of five to two ; twelfthly, the proportional equality between the first line and the last—that of five to one ; thirteenthly, the proportional equality between each of the middle lines and the last—that of two to one ; lastly, the proportional equality, as concerns number, between all the lines, taken collectively, and any individual line—that of four to one.

The consideration of this last equality would give birth immediately to the idea of *stanza*¹—that is to say, the insulation of lines into equal or obviously proportional masses. In its primitive (which was also its best) form, the stanza would most probably have had absolute unity. In other words, the removal of any one of its lines would have rendered it imperfect ; as in the case above, where, if the last line, for example, be taken away, there is left no rhyme to the ‘dutiful’ of the first. Modern stanza is excessively loose—and where so, ineffective, as a matter of course.

Now, although in the deliberate written statement which I have here given of these various systems of equalities, there seems to be an infinity of complexity—so much that it is hard to conceive the mind taking cognizance of them all in the brief period occupied by the perusal or recital of the stanza—yet the difficulty is in fact apparent only when we will it to become so. Any one fond of mental experiment may satisfy himself, by trial, that, in listening to the lines, he does actually (although with a seeming unconsciousness, on

¹ A stanza is often vulgarly, and with gross impropriety, called a *verse*.

account of the rapid evolutions of sensation) recognize and instantaneously appreciate (more or less intensely as his ear is cultivated) each and all of the equalizations detailed. The pleasure received, or receivable, has very much such progressive increase, and in very nearly such mathematical relations, as those which I have suggested in the case of the crystal.

It will be observed that I speak of merely a proximate equality between the first syllable of ‘dutiful’ and that of ‘beautiful’; and it may be asked why we cannot imagine the earliest rhymes to have had absolute instead of proximate equality of sound. But absolute equality would have involved the use of identical words; and it is the duplicate sameness or monotony—that of sense as well as that of sound—which would have caused these rhymes to be rejected in the very first instance.

The narrowness of the limits within which verse composed of natural feet alone must necessarily have been confined, would have led, after a *very* brief interval, to the trial and immediate adoption of artificial feet—that is to say, of feet *not* constituted each of a single word, but two or even three words; or of parts of words. These feet would be intermingled with natural ones. For example:

ă brēath | cān māke | thēm ās | ă brēath | hās māde.

This is an iambic line in which each iambus is formed of two words. Again:

Thě ūn | īmā | gīnā | blē mīght | öf Jōve.

This is an iambic line in which the first foot is formed of a word and a part of a word; the second and third, of parts taken from the body or interior of a word; the fourth, of a part and a whole; the fifth, of two

complete words. There are no *natural* feet in either lines. Again :

Cān īt bē | fānciēd thāt | Dēity | ēvēr vīn | dīctively
 Māde īn hīs | īmāge ā | mānnikīn | mērely tō | māddēn īt ?

These are two dactylic lines in which we find natural feet ('Deity', 'mannikin'), feet composed of two words ('fancied that', 'image a', 'merely to', 'madden it'), feet composed of three words ('can it be', 'made in his'), a foot composed of a part of a word ('dictively'), and a foot composed of a word and a part of a word ('ever vin').

And now, in our supposititious progress, we have gone so far as to exhaust all the *essentialities* of verse. What follows may, strictly speaking, be regarded as embellishment merely—but even in this embellishment, the rudimentary sense of *equality* would have been the never-ceasing impulse. It would, for example, be simply in seeking farther administration to this sense that men would come, in time, to think of the *refrain*, or burden, where, at the closes of the several stanzas of a poem, one word or phrase is *repeated*; and of alliteration, in whose simplest form a consonant is *repeated* in the commencements of various words. This effect would be extended so as to embrace repetitions both of vowels and of consonants, in the bodies as well as in the beginnings of words; and, at a later period would be made to infringe on the province of rhyme, by the introduction of general similarity of sound between whole feet occurring in the body of a line:—all of which modifications I have exemplified in the line above,

Made in his image a mannikin merely to madden it.

Farther cultivation would improve also the *refrain* by relieving its monotone in slightly varying the

phrase at each repetition, or (as I have attempted to do in ‘The Raven’) in retaining the phrase and varying its application—although this latter point is not strictly a rhythmical effect *alone*. Finally, poets when fairly wearied with following precedent—following it the more closely the less they perceived it in company with Reason—would adventure so far as to indulge in positive rhyme at other points than the ends of lines. First, they would put it in the middle of the line; then at some point where the multiple would be less obvious; then, alarmed at their own audacity, they would undo all their work by cutting these lines in two. And here is the fruitful source of the infinity of ‘short metre’, by which modern poetry, if not distinguished, is at least disgraced. It would require a high degree, indeed, both of cultivation and of courage, on the part of any versifier, to enable him to place his rhymes—and let them remain—at unquestionably their best position, that of unusual and *unanticipated* intervals.

On account of the stupidity of some people, or (if talent be a more respectable word), on account of their talent for misconception—I think it necessary to add here, first, that I believe the ‘processes’ above detailed to be nearly if not accurately those which *did* occur in the gradual creation of what we now call verse; secondly, that, although I so believe, I yet urge neither the assumed fact nor my belief in it, as a part of the true propositions of this paper; thirdly, that in regard to the aim of this paper, it is of no consequence whether these processes did occur either in the order I have assigned them, or at all; my design being simply, in presenting a general type of what such processes *might* have been, and *must* have resembled, to help *there* the ‘some people’, to an

easy understanding of what I have farther to say on the topic of Verse.

There is one point which, in my summary of the processes, I have purposely forborne to touch; because this point, being the most important of all, on account of the immensity of error usually involved in its consideration, would have led me into a series of detail inconsistent with the object of a summary.

Every reader of verse must have observed how seldom it happens that even any one line proceeds uniformly with a succession, such as I have supposed, of absolutely equal feet; that is to say, with a succession of iambuses only, or of trochees only, or of daectyls only, or of anapaests only, or of spondees only. Even in the most musical lines we find the succession interrupted. The iambic pentameters of Pope, for example, will be found, on examination, frequently varied by trochees in the beginning, or by (what seem to be) anapaests in the body, of the line.

Öh thou | whätē | věr tī | tlě plēase | thīne ēar |
 Dēan Drā | píér Bick | ērstäff | ör Gūl | ivēr |
 Whēthēr | thōu choōse | Cērvān | tēs' sē | rīoüs aīr |
 Ör laūgh | and shāke | īn Rāb | ēlāis' ēa | sy chāir: |

Were any one weak enough to refer to the prosodies for the solution of the difficulty here, he would find it *solved* as usual by a *rule*, stating the fact (or what it, the rule, supposes to be the fact), but without the slightest attempt at the *rationale*. ‘By a *synaeresis* of the two short syllables,’ say the books, ‘an anapaest may sometimes be employed for an iambus, or a daectyl for a trochee. . . . In the beginning of a line a trochee is often used for an iambus.’

Blending is the plain English for *synaeresis*—but there should be *no* blending; neither is an anapaest

ever employed for an iambus, or a dactyl for a trochee, These feet differ in time ; and no feet so differing can ever be legitimately used in the same line. An anapaest is equal to four short syllables—an iambus only to three. Dactyls and trochees hold the same relation. The principle of *equality*, in verse, admits, it is true, of variation at certain points, for the relief of monotone, as I have already shown, but the point of *time* is that point which, being the rudimental one, must never be tampered with at all.

To explain :—In farther efforts for the relief of monotone than those to which I have alluded in the summary, men soon came to see that there was no absolute necessity for adhering to the precise number of syllables, provided the time required for the whole foot was preserved inviolate. They saw, for instance, that in such a line as

Or laūgh | ānd shāke | īn Rāb | ēlāis' ēa | sy chāir, |

the equalization of the three syllables *elais' ea* with the two syllables composing any of the other feet, could be readily effected by pronouncing the two syllables *elais'* in double quick time. By pronouncing each of the syllables *e* and *lais'* twice as rapidly as the syllable *sy*, or the syllable *in*, or any other syllable, they could bring the two of them, taken together, to the length, that is to say, to the time, of any one short syllable. This consideration enabled them to affect the agreeable variation of three syllables in place of the uniform two. And variation was the object—variation to the ear. What sense is there, then, in supposing this object rendered null by the *blending* of the two syllables so as to render them, in absolute effect, one? Of course, there must be *no* blending. Each syllable must be pronounced as distinctly as

possible (or the variation is lost), but with twice the rapidity in which the ordinary syllable is enunciated. That the syllables *elais' ea* do not compose an *anapaest* is evident, and the signs (ääā) of their accentuation are erroneous. The foot might be written thus (ƿƿƿ), the inverted crescents expressing double quick time; and might be called a *bastard iambus*.

Here is a trochaic line:

Sēe thē dēlicāte | fōotēd | rēin-deēr. |

The prosodies—that is to say, the most considerate of them—would here decide that ‘*delicate*’ is a dactyl used in place of a trochee, and would refer to what they call their ‘rule’, for justification. Others, varying the stupidity, would insist upon a Procrustean adjustment thus (del’cate)—an adjustment recommended to all such words as *silvery*, *murmuring*, etc., which, it is said, should be not only pronounced, but written *silv’ry*, *murm’ring*, and so on, whenever they find themselves in trochaic predicament. I have only to say that ‘*delicate*’, when circumstanced as above, is neither a dactyl nor a dactyl’s equivalent; that I would suggest for it this (ƿƿƿ) accentuation; that I think it as well to call it a *bastard trochee*; and that all words, at all events, should be written and pronounced *in full*, and as nearly as possible as nature intended them.

About eleven years ago, there appeared in the *American Monthly Magazine* (then edited, I believe, by Messrs. Hoffman and Benjamin) a review of Mr. Willis’ Poems; the critic putting forth his strength or his weakness, in an endeavour to show that the poet was either absurdly affected, or grossly ignorant of the laws of verse; the accusation being based altogether on the fact that Mr. W. made occasional use of this

very word ‘delicate’, and other similar words, in ‘the Heroic measure, which every one knew consisted of feet of two syllables’. Mr. W. has often, for example, such lines as

That binds him to a woman’s *delicate* love—
In the gay sunshine, *reverent* in the storm—
With its *invisible* fingers my loose hair.

Here, of course, the feet *licate love, verent in, and sible fin*, are bastard iambuses; are *not* anapaests; and are *not* improperly used. Their employment, on the contrary, by Mr. Willis, is but one of the innumerable instances he has given of keen sensibility in all those matters of taste which may be classed under the general head of *fanciful embellishment*.

It is also about eleven years ago, if I am not mistaken, since Mr. Horne (of England), the author of ‘Orion’, one of the noblest epics in any language, thought it necessary to preface his ‘Chaucer Modernized’ by a very long and evidently a very elaborate essay, of which the greater portion was occupied in a discussion of the seemingly anomalous foot of which we have been speaking. Mr. Horne upholds Chaucer in its frequent use; maintains his superiority, *on account* of his so frequently using it, over all English versifiers; and, indignantly repelling the common idea of those who make verse on their fingers, that the superfluous syllable is a roughness and an error, very chivalrously makes battle for it as ‘a grace’. That a grace it *is*, there can be no doubt; and what I complain of is, that the author of the most happily versified long poem in existence, should have been under the necessity of discussing this grace merely *as* a grace, through forty or fifty vague pages, solely because of his inability to show *how* and *why* it is a

grace—by which showing the question would have been settled in an instant.

About the trochee used for an iambus, as we see in the beginning of the line,

Whēthēr thou choose Cervantes' serious air,

there is little that need be said. It brings me to the general proposition that in all rhythms, the prevalent or distinctive feet may be varied at will, and nearly at random, by the *occasional* introduction of equivalent feet—that is to say, feet the sum of whose syllabic times is equal to the sum of the syllabic times of the distinctive feet. Thus the trochee *whēthēr*, is equal in the sum of the times of its syllables, to the iambus, *thōū chōose*, in the sum of the times of its syllables; each foot being, in time, equal to three short syllables. Good versifiers, who happen to be, also, good poets, contrive to relieve the monotone of a series of feet, by the use of equivalent feet only at rare intervals, and at such points of their subject as seem in accordance with the *startling* character of the variation. Nothing of this care is seen in the line quoted above—although Pope has some fine instances of the duplicate effect. Where vehemence is to be strongly expressed, I am not sure that we should be wrong in venturing on *two consecutive* equivalent feet—although I cannot say that I have ever known the adventure made, except in the following passage, which occurs in ‘Al Aaraaf’, a boyish poem, written by myself when a boy. I am referring to the sudden and rapid advent of a star:

Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes
Alone could see the phantom in the skies,
Whēn firſt the phāntōm's cōurſe wās foūnd tō bē
Hēadlōng hīthērward o'er the starry sea.

In the ‘general proposition’ above, I speak of the *occasional* introduction of equivalent feet. It sometimes happens that unskilful versifiers, without knowing what they do, or why they do it, introduce so many ‘variations’ as to exceed in number the ‘distinctive’ feet; when the ear becomes at once balked by the *bouleversemēt* of the rhythm. Too many trochees, for example, inserted in an iambic rhythm, would convert the latter to a trochaic. I may note here, that, in all cases, the rhythm designed should be commenced and continued, *without variation*, until the ear has had full time to comprehend what *is* the rhythm. In violation of a rule so obviously founded in common-sense, many even of our best poets, do not scruple to begin an iambic rhythm with a trochee, or the converse; or a dactylic with an anapaest, or the converse; and so on.

A somewhat less objectionable error, although still a decided one, is that of commencing a rhythm, not with a different equivalent foot, but with a ‘bastard’ foot of the rhythm intended. For example:

Māny ā | thōught wīll | cōme tō | mēmōry. |

Here *many a* is what I have explained to be a bastard trochee, and to be understood should be accented with inverted crescents. It is objectionable solely on account of its position as the *opening* foot of a trochaic rhythm. *Memory*, similarly accented, is also a bastard trochee, but *unobjectionable*, although by no means demanded.

The farther illustration of this point will enable me to take an important step.

One of the finest poets, Mr. Christopher Pease Cranch, begins a very beautiful poem thus :

Many are the thoughts that come to me
 In my lonely musing;
 And they drift so strange and swift
 There's no time for choosing
 Which to follow; for to leave
 Any, seems a losing.

'A losing' to Mr. Cranch, of course—but this *en passant*. It will be seen here that the intention is trochaic, although we do *not* see this intention by the opening foot, as we should do—or even by the opening line. Reading the whole stanza, however, we perceive the trochaic rhythm as the general design, and so, after some reflection, we divide the first line thus :

Many are the | thōughts thāt | cōme tō mē. |

Thus scanned, the line will seem musical. It *is*—highly so. And it is because there is no end to instances of just such lines of apparently incomprehensible music, that Coleridge thought proper to invent his nonsensical *system* of what he calls 'scanning by accents'—as if 'scanning by accents' were any thing more than a phrase. Wherever 'Christabel' is really *not rough*, it can be as readily scanned by the true *laws* (not the supposititious *rules*) of verse as can the simplest pentameter of Pope; and where it *is* rough (*passim*), these same laws will enable any one of common-sense to show *why* it is rough, and to point out, instantaneously, the remedy for the roughness.

A reads and re-reads a certain line, and pronounces it false in rhythm—unmusical. *B*, however, reads it to *A*, and *A* is at once struck with the perfection of the rhythm, and wonders at his dulness in not 'catching' it before. Henceforward he admits the line to be musical. *B*, triumphant, asserts that, to

be sure, the line is musical—for it is the work of Coleridge,—and that it is *A* who is *not*; the fault being in *A*'s false reading. Now here *A* is right and *B* wrong. *That* rhythm is erroneous (at some point or other more or less obvious) which *any* ordinary reader *can*, without design, read improperly. It is the business of the poet so to construct his line that the intention *must* be caught *at once*. Even when these men have precisely the same understanding of a sentence, they differ, and often widely, in their modes of enunciating it. Any one who has taken the trouble to examine the topic of emphasis (by which I here mean not *accent* of particular syllables, but the dwelling on entire words), must have seen that men emphasize in the most singularly arbitrary manner. There are certain large classes of people, for example, who persist in emphasizing their monosyllables. Little uniformity of emphasis prevails; because the thing itself—the idea, emphasis—is referable to no natural, at least to no well-comprehended, and therefore uniform, law. Beyond a very narrow and vague limit the whole matter is conventionality. And if we differ in emphasis even when we agree in comprehension, how much more so in the former when in the latter too! Apart, however, from the consideration of natural disagreement, is it not clear that, by tripping here and mouthing there, any sequence of words may be twisted into any species of rhythm? But are we thence to deduce that all sequences of words are rhythmical in a rational understanding of the term?—for this is the deduction, precisely, to which the *reductio ad absurdum* will, in the end, bring all the propositions of Coleridge. Out of a hundred readers of ‘Christabel’, fifty will be able to make nothing of its rhythm, while forty-nine of the

remaining fifty will, with some ado, fancy they comprehend it, after the fourth or fifth perusal. The one out of the whole hundred who shall both comprehend and admire it at first sight must be an unaccountably clever person—and I am by far too modest to assume, for a moment, that that very clever person is myself.

In illustration of what is here advanced I cannot do better than quote a poem :

Pease porridge hot—pease porridge cold—
Pease porridge in the pot—nine days old.

Now those of my readers who have never *heard* this poem pronounced according to the nursery conventionality, will find its rhythm as obscure as an explanatory note; while those who *have* heard it, will divide it thus, declare it musical, and wonder how there can be any doubt about it.

Pease | porridge | hot | pease | porridge | cold |
Pease | porridge | in the | pot | nine | days | old. |

The chief thing in the way of this species of rhythm, is the necessity which it imposes upon the poet of travelling in constant company with his compositions, so as to be ready, at a moment's notice, to avail himself of a well understood poetical license—that of reading aloud one's own doggerel.

In Mr. Cranch's line,

Many are the | thoughts that | come to | me, |

the general error of which I speak is, of course, very partially exemplified, and the purpose for which, chiefly, I cite it, lies yet farther on in our topic.

The two divisions, '*thoughts that*' and '*come to*', are ordinary trochees. Of the last division, '*me*', we

will talk hereafter. The first division, ‘*many are the*,’ would be thus accented by the Greek Prosodies, ‘māny āre thē,’ and would be called by them *aστρολογος*. The Latin books would style the foot *Poeon Primus*, and both Greek and Latin would swear that it was composed of a trochee and what they term a pyrrhic—that is to say, a foot of two *short* syllables—a thing that *cannot be*, as I shall presently show.

But now, there is an obvious difficulty. The *astrologos*, according to the prosodies’ own showing, is equal to *five* short syllables, and the trochee to *three*—yet, in the line quoted, these two feet are equal. They occupy *precisely* the same time. In fact, the whole music of the line depends upon their being *made* to occupy the same time. The prosodies then, have demonstrated what all mathematicians have stupidly failed in demonstrating—that three and five are one and the same thing.

After what I have already said, however, about the bastard trochee and the bastard iambus, no one can have any trouble in understanding that *many are the* is of similar character. It is merely a bolder variation than usual from the routine of trochees, and introduces to the bastard trochee one additional syllable. But this syllable is not *short*. That is, it is not short in the sense of ‘*short*’ as applied to the final syllable of the ordinary trochee, where the word means merely *the half of long*.

In this case (that of the additional syllable), ‘*short*,’ if used at all, must be used in the sense of *the sixth of long*. And all the three final syllables can be called *short* only with the same understanding of the term. The three together are equal only to the one short syllable (whose place they supply) of the ordinary trochee. It follows that there is no sense in thus (·)

accenting these syllables. We must devise for them some new character which shall denote the sixth of long. Let it be (c)—the crescent placed with the curve to the left. The whole foot (*māny āre thē*) might be called a *quick trochee*.

We come now to the final division, ‘*me*,’ of Mr. Cranch’s line. It is clear that this foot, short as it appears, is fully equal in time to each of the preceding. It is in fact the caesura—the foot which, in the beginning of this paper, I called the most important in all verse. Its chief office is that of pause or termination; and here—at the end of a line—its use is easy, because there is no danger of misapprehending its value. We pause on it, by a seeming necessity, just as long as it has taken us to pronounce the preceding feet, whether iambuses, trochees, dactyls, or anapaests. It is thus a *variable foot*, and, with some care, may be well introduced into the body of a line, as in a little poem of great beauty by Mrs. Welby:

I have | a lit | tle step | son | of on | ly three | years old. |

Here we dwell on the caesura, *son*, just as long as it requires us to pronounce either of the preceding or succeeding iambuses. Its value, therefore, in this line, is that of three short syllables. In the following dactylic line its value is that of four short syllables.

Pale as a | lily was | Emily | Gray.

I have accented the caesura with a dotted line (.....) by way of expressing this variability of value.

I observed just now that there could be no such foot as one of two short syllables. What we start from in the very beginning of all idea on the topic of verse, is quantity, *length*. Thus when we enunciate

an independent syllable it is long, as a matter of course. If we enunciate two, dwelling on both equally, we express equality in the enumeration, or length, and have a right to call them two long syllables. If we dwell on one more than the other, we have also a right to call one short, because it is short in relation to the other. But if we dwell on both equally and with a tripping voice, saying to ourselves here are two short syllables, the query might well be asked of us—‘in relation to what are they short?’ Shortness is but the negation of length. To say, then, that two syllables, placed independently of any other syllable, are short, is merely to say that they have no positive length, or enunciation—in other words that they are no syllables—that they do not exist at all. And if, persisting, we add any thing about their equality, we are merely floundering in the idea of an identical equation, where, x being equal to x , nothing is shown to be equal to zero. In a word, we can form no conception of a pyrrhic as of an independent foot. It is a mere chimera bred in the mad fancy of a pedant.

From what I have said about the equalization of the several feet of a *line*, it must not be deduced that any *necessity* for equality in time exists between the rhythm of *several lines*. A poem, or even a stanza, may begin with iambuses, in the first line, and proceed with anapaests in the second, or even with the less accordant dactyls, as in the opening of quite a pretty specimen of verse by Miss Mary A. S. Aldrich.

The wa | ter li | ly sleeps | in pride |
Dōwn in thē | dēpths of thē | āzūre | lake. |

Here *azure* is a spondee, equivalent to a dactyl; *lake*, a caesura.

I shall now best proceed in quoting the initial lines of Byron's 'Bride of Abydos':

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
 Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime—
 Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle
 Now melt into softness, now madden to crime ?
 Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
 Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine,
 And the light wings of Zephyr, oppressed with perfume,
 Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gul in their bloom ?
 Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit
 And the voice of the nightingale never is mute ;

.

Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
 And all save the spirit of man is divine ?
 'T is the land of the East—'t is the clime of the Sun—
 Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done ?
 Oh, wild as the accents of lovers' farewell
 Are the hearts that they bear and the tales that they tell !

Now the flow of these lines (as times go) is very sweet and musical. They have been often admired, and justly—as times go,—that is to say, it is a rare thing to find better versification of its kind. And where verse is pleasant to the ear, it is silly to find fault with it because it refuses to be scanned. Yet I have heard men, professing to be scholars, who made no scruple of abusing these lines of Byron's on the ground that they were musical in spite of *all law*. Other gentlemen, *not* scholars, abused 'all law' for the same reason; and it occurred neither to the one party nor to the other that the law about which they were disputing might possibly be no law at all—an ass of a law in the skin of a lion.

The Grammars said something about dactylic lines, and it was easily seen that *these* lines were at least

meant for dactylic. The first one was, therefore, thus divided :

Knōw yē thē | lānd whēre thē | cyprēss ānd | myrtlē. |

The concluding foot was a mystery ; but the Prosodies said something about the dactylic ‘measure’ calling now and then for a double rhyme ; and the court of inquiry were content to rest in the double rhyme, without exactly perceiving what a double rhyme had to do with the question of an irregular foot. Quitting the first line, the second was thus scanned :

Arē ēmblēms | ȳf dēeds thāt | āre dōne īn | thēir clīme. |

It was immediately seen, however, that *this* would not do,—it was at war with the whole emphasis of the reading. It could not be supposed that Byron, or any one in his senses, intended to place stress upon such monosyllables as ‘are’, ‘of’, and ‘their’, nor could ‘their clime’, collated with ‘to crime’, in the corresponding line below, be fairly twisted into any thing like a ‘double rhyme’, so as to bring every thing within the category of the grammars. But farther these grammars spoke not. The inquirers, therefore, in spite of their sense of harmony in the lines, when considered without reference to scansion, fell back upon the idea that the ‘Are’ was a blunder,—an excess for which the poet should be sent to Coventry,—and, striking it out, they scanned the remainder of the line as follows :

— ēmblēms ȳf | dēeds thāt āre | dōne īn thēir | clīme. |

This answered pretty well ; but the grammars admitted no such foot as a foot of one syllable ; and besides the rhythm was dactylic. In despair, the books are well searched, however, and at last the investigators are gratified by a full solution of the riddle in the pro-

found ‘Observation’ quoted in the beginning of this article:—‘When a syllable is wanting, the verse is said to be catalectic; when the measure is exact, the line is acatalectic; when there is a redundant syllable it forms hypermeter.’ This is enough. The anomalous line is pronounced to be catalectic at the head and to form hypermeter at the tail,—and so on, and so on; it being soon discovered that nearly all the remaining lines are in a similar predicament, and that what flows so smoothly to the ear, although so roughly to the eye, is, after all, a mere jumble of catalecticism, acatalecticism, and hypermeter—not to say worse.

Now, had this court of inquiry been in possession of even the shadow of the *philosophy* of Verse, they would have had no trouble in reconciling this oil and water of the eye and ear, by merely scanning the passage without reference to lines, and, continuously, thus:

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle Are | emblems of | deeds that are | done in their | clime Where the | rage of the | vulture the | love of the | turtle Now | melt into | softness now | madden to | *crime* | Know ye the | land of the | cedar and | vine Where the | flowers ever | blossom the | beams ever | shine Where the | light wings of | Zephyr op | pressed with per | *fume Wax* | faint o'er the | gardens of | Gul in their | bloom Where the | citron and | olive are | fairest of | fruit And the | voice of the | nightingale | never is | mute Where the | virgins are | soft as the | roses they | *twine* And | all save the | spirit of | man is di | vine 'Tis the | land of the | East 't is the | clime of the | Sun Can he | smile on such | deeds as his | children have | *done* Oh | wild as the | accents of | lovers' fare | well Are the | hearts that they | bear and the | tales that they | *tell*.

Here ‘*crime*’ and ‘*tell*’ (italicized) are caesuras, each having the value of a dactyl, four short syllables;

while '*fume Wax*', '*twine And*', and '*done Oh*', are spondees, which, of course, being composed of two long syllables, are also equal to four short, and are the dactyl's natural equivalent. The nicety of Byron's ear has led him into a succession of feet which, with two trivial exceptions as regards melody, are absolutely accurate—a very rare occurrence this in dactylic or anapaestic rhythms. The exceptions are found in the spondee '*twine And*', and the dactyl, '*smile on such*'. Both feet are false in point of melody. In '*twine And*', to make out the rhythm, we must force '*And*' into a length which it will not naturally bear. We are called on to sacrifice either the proper length of the syllable as demanded by its position as a member of a spondee, or the customary accentuation of the word in conversation. There is no hesitation, and should be none. We at once give up the sound for the sense; and the rhythm is imperfect. In this instance it is *very* slightly so;—not one person in ten thousand could, by ear, detect the inaccuracy. But the *perfection* of Verse, as regards melody, consists in its *never* demanding any such sacrifice as is here demanded. The rhythmical, must agree, *thoroughly*, with the reading, flow. This perfection has in no instance been attained—but is unquestionably attainable. '*Smile on such*', the dactyl, is incorrect, because '*such*', from the character of the two consonants *ch*, cannot *easily* be enunciated in the ordinary time of a short syllable, which its position declares that it is. Almost every reader will be able to appreciate the slight difficulty here; and yet the error is by no means so important as that of the '*And*' in the spondee. By dexterity we *may* pronounce '*such*' in the true time; but the attempt to remedy the rhythmical deficiency of the '*And*' by drawing it out, merely

aggravates the offence against natural enunciation, by directing attention to the offence.

My main object, however, in quoting these lines, is to show that, in spite of the prosodies, the length of a line is entirely an arbitrary matter. We might divide the commencement of Byron's poem thus:

Know ye the | land where the |
or thus:

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and |
or thus:

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle are |
or thus:

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle are |
emblems of |

In short, we may give it any division we please, and the lines will be good—provided we have at least *two* feet in a line. As in mathematics two units are required to form number, so rhythm (from the Greek ἀριθμός, number) demands for its formation at least two feet. Beyond doubt, we often see such lines as

Know ye the—
Land where the—

lines of one foot; and our prosodies admit such; but with impropriety: for common-sense would dictate that every so obvious division of a poem as is made by a line, should include within itself all that is necessary for its own comprehension; but in a line of one foot we can have no appreciation of *rhythm*, which depends upon the equality between *two* or more pulsations. The false lines, consisting sometimes of a single caesura, which are seen in mock Pindaric odes, are of course 'rhythrical' only in connection with some other line;

and it is this want of independent rhythm which adapts them to the purposes of burlesque alone. Their effect is that of incongruity (the principle of mirth), for they include the blankness of prose amid the harmony of verse.

My second object in quoting Byron's lines, was that of showing how absurd it often is to cite a single line from amid the body of a poem, for the purpose of instancing the perfection or imperfection of the line's rhythm. Were we to see by itself

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle,
we might justly condemn it as defective in the final foot, which is equal to only three, instead of being equal to four, short syllables.

In the foot '*flowers ever*' we shall find a further exemplification of the principle of the bastard iambus, bastard trochee, and quick trochee, as I have been at some pains in describing these feet above. All the Prosodies on English Verse would insist upon making an elision in '*flowers*', thus '*flow'rs*', but this is nonsense. In the quick trochee '*māny āre thē*' occurring in Mr. Cranch's *trochaic* line, we had to equalize the time of the three syllables '*any, are, the*' to that of the one *short* syllable whose position they usurp. Accordingly each of these syllables is equal to the third of a short syllable—that is to say, the *sixth of a long*. But in Byron's *dactylic* rhythm, we have to equalize the time of the three syllables '*ers, ev, er*' to that of the one *long* syllable whose position they usurp, or (which is the same thing) of the *two short*. Therefore, the value of each of the syllables '*ers, ev, and er*' is the *third of a long*. We enunciate them with only half the rapidity we employ in enunciating the three final syllables of the quick trochee—which latter

is a rare foot. The ‘*flowers ever*’, on the contrary, is as common in the daetylic rhythm as is the *bastard trochee* in the trochaic, or the *bastard iambus* in the iambic. We may as well accent it with the curve of the crescent to the right, and call it a *bastard dactyl*. A *bastard anapaest*, whose nature I now need be at no trouble in explaining, will of course occur, now and then, in an anapaestic rhythm.

In order to avoid any chance of that confusion which is apt to be introduced in an essay of this kind by too sudden and radical an alteration of the conventionalities to which the reader has been accustomed, I have thought it right to suggest for the accent marks of the *bastard trochee*, *bastard iambus*, etc., etc., certain characters which, in merely varying the direction of the ordinary short accent (˘), should imply, what is the fact, that the feet themselves are not *new* feet, in any proper sense, but simply modifications of the feet, respectively, from which they derive their names. Thus a *bastard iambus* is, in its essentiality,—that is to say, in its time,—an iambus. The variation lies only in the *distribution* of this time. The time, for example, occupied by the one short (or *half of long*) syllable, in the ordinary iambus, is, in the *bastard*, spread equally over two syllables, which are accordingly the *fourth of long*.

But this fact—the fact of the essentiality, or whole time, of the foot being unchanged—is now so fully before the reader that I may venture to propose, finally, an accentuation which shall answer the real purpose—that is to say, what should be the real purpose—of all accentuation: the purpose of expressing to the eye the exact relative value of every syllable employed in Verse.

I have already shown that enunciation, or *length*, is the point from which we start. In other words, we

begin with a *long syllable*. This, then, is our unit; and there will be no need of accenting it at all. An unaccented syllable, in a system of accentuation, is to be regarded always as a long syllable. Thus a spondee would be without accent. In an iambus, the first syllable being ‘short’, or the *half* of long, should be accented with a small 2, placed *beneath* the syllable; the last syllable, being long, should be unaccented: the whole would be thus (control). In a trochee, these accents would be merely conversed, thus (manly).

In a dactyl, each of the two final syllables, being the *half* of long, should, also, be accented with a small 2 beneath the syllable; and, the first syllable left unaccented, the whole would be thus (happiness).

In an anapaest we should converse the dactyl, thus (in the land). In the bastard dactyl, each of the three concluding syllables being the *third* of long, should be accented with a small 3 beneath the syllable, and the whole foot would stand thus (flowers ever).

In the bastard anapaest we should converse the bastard dactyl, thus (in the rebound). In the bastard iambus, each of the two initial syllables, being the *fourth* of long, should be accented below with a small 4; the whole foot would be thus (in the rain).

In the bastard trochee we should converse the bastard iambus, thus (many a). In the quick trochee, each of the three concluding syllables, being the *sixth* of long, should be accented below with a small 6; the whole foot would be thus (many are the). The quick iambus is not yet created, and most probably never will be, for it will be excessively useless, awkward, and liable to misconception,—as I have already shown that even

the quick trochee is,—but, should it appear, we must accent it by conversing the quick trochee. The caesura, being variable in length, but always *longer than 'long'*, should be accented *above*, with a number expressing the length or value of the distinctive foot of the rhythm in which it occurs. Thus a caesura, occurring in a spondaic rhythm, would be accented with a small $\frac{2}{2}$ above the syllable, or, rather, foot. Occurring in a dactylic or anapaestic rhythm, we also accent it with the $\frac{2}{2}$, above the foot. Occurring in an iambic rhythm, however, it must be accented, above, with $1\frac{1}{2}$, for this is the relative value of the iambus. Occurring in the trochaic rhythm, we give it, of course, the same accentuation. For the complex $1\frac{1}{2}$, however, it would be advisable to substitute the simpler expression, $\frac{3}{2}$, which amounts to the same thing.

In this system of accentuation Mr. Cranch's lines, quoted above, would thus be written :

Many are the | thoughts that | come to | me $\frac{3}{2}$
 In my | lonely | musing, |
 And they | drift so | strange and | swift $\frac{3}{2}$
 There's no | time for | choosing |
 Which to | follow, | for to | leave $\frac{3}{2}$
 Any | seems a | losing. |

In the ordinary system the accentuation would be thus :

Māny arē thē | thōughts thāt | cōme tō | mē
 In my lōnely mūsing, |
 And thēy drīft sō | strānge ānd | swīft |
 Thēre's nō | tīme fōr | choōsing |
 Whīch tō | fōllōw, fōr tō | lēave
 Any | sēems ā | lōsing. |

It must be observed here that I do not grant this to be the ‘ordinary’ scansion. On the contrary, I never yet met the man who had the faintest comprehension of the true scanning of these lines, or of such as these. But granting this to be the mode in which our prosodies would divide the feet, they would accentuate the syllables as just above.

Now, let any reasonable person compare the two modes. The first advantage seen in my mode is that of simplicity—of time, labor, and ink saved. Counting the fractions as *two* accents, even, there will be found only *twenty-six* accents to the stanza. In the common accentuation there are *forty-one*. But admit that all this is a trifle, which it is *not*, and let us proceed to points of importance. Does the common accentuation express the truth in particular, in general, or in any regard? Is it consistent with itself? Does it convey either to the ignorant or to the scholar a just conception of the rhythm of the lines? Each of these questions must be answered in the negative. The crescents, being precisely similar, must be understood as expressing, all of them, one and the same thing; and so all prosodies have always understood them and wished them to be understood. They express, indeed, ‘short’; but this word has all kinds of meanings. It serves to represent (the reader is left to guess *when*) sometimes the half, sometimes the third, sometimes the fourth, sometimes the sixth of ‘long’; while ‘long’ itself, in the books, is left undefined and undescribed. On the other hand, the horizontal accent, it may be said, expresses sufficiently well and unvaryingly the syllables which are meant to be long. It does nothing of the kind. This horizontal accent is placed over the caesura (wherever, as in the Latin Prosodies, the caesura is recognized) as well as over

the ordinary long syllable, and implies any thing and every thing, just as the crescent. But grant that it does express the ordinary long syllables (leaving the caesura out of question), have I not given the identical expression by not employing any expression at all? In a word, while the prosodies, with a certain number of accents express *precisely nothing whatever*, I, with scarcely half the number, have expressed every thing which, in a system of accentuation, demands expression. In glancing at my mode in the lines of Mr. Cranch it will be seen that it conveys not only the exact relation of the syllables and feet, among themselves, in those particular lines, but their precise value in relation to any other existing or conceivable feet or syllables in any existing or conceivable system of rhythm.

The object of what we call *scansion* is the distinct marking of the rhythmical flow. Scansion with accents or perpendicular lines between the feet—that is to say, scansion *by* the voice only—is scansion *to* the ear only; and all very good in its way. The written scansion addresses the ear through the eye. In either case the object is the distinct marking of the rhythmical, musical, or reading flow. There *can* be no other object, and there is none. Of course, then, the scansion and the reading flow should go hand-in-hand. The former must agree with the latter. The former represents and expresses the latter; and is good or bad as it truly or falsely represents and expresses it. If by the written scansion of a line we are not enabled to perceive any rhythm or music in the line, then either the line is unrhythmical or the scansion false. Apply all this to the English lines which we have quoted, at various points, in the course of this article. It will be found that the scansion

exactly conveys the rhythm, and thus thoroughly fulfils the only purpose for which scansion is required.

But let the scansion of the schools be applied to the Greek and Latin verse, and what result do we find?—that the verse is one thing and the scansion quite another. The ancient verse, *read* aloud, is in general musical, and occasionally *very* musical. *Scanned* by the prosodial rules we can, for the most part, make nothing of it whatever. In the case of the English verse, the more emphatically we dwell on the divisions between the feet, the more distinct is our perception of the kind of rhythm intended. In the case of the Greek and Latin, the more we dwell the *less* distinct is this perception. To make this clear by an example:

Maecenas, atavis edite regibus,
O, et praesidium et dulce decus meum,
Sunt quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat, metaque fervidis
Evitata rotis, palmaque nobilis
Terrarum dominos evehit ad Deos.

Now in *reading* these lines, there is scarcely one person in a thousand who, if even ignorant of Latin, will not immediately feel and appreciate their flow—their music. A prosodist, however, informs the public that the *scansion* runs thus:

Maece | nas ata | vis | edite | regibus |
O et | praesidi' | et | dulce de | cus meum |
Sunt quos | curricu | lo | pulver' O | lympicum |
Colle | gisse ju | vat | metaque | fervidis |
Evi | .tata ro | tis | palmaque | nobilis |
Terra | rum domi | nos | evehit | ad Deos. |

Now I do not deny that we get a *certain sort* of music from the lines if we read them according to this scansion, but I wish to call attention to the fact that this scansion, and the certain sort of music which grows out of it, are entirely at war not only with the

reading flow which any ordinary person would naturally give the lines, but with the reading flow universally given them, and never denied them, by even the most obstinate and stolid of scholars.

And now these questions are forced upon us: ‘Why exists this discrepancy between the modern verse with its scansion, and the ancient verse with its scansion?’—‘Why, in the former case, are there agreement and representation, while in the latter there is neither the one nor the other?’ or, to come to the point,—‘How are we to reconcile the ancient verse with the scholastic scansion of it?’ This absolutely necessary conciliation—shall we bring it about by supposing the scholastic scansion wrong because the ancient verse is right, or by maintaining that the ancient verse is wrong because the scholastic scansion is not to be gainsaid?

Were we to adopt the latter mode of arranging the difficulty, we might, in some measure, at least simplify the expression of the arrangement by putting it thus: Because the pedants have no eyes, therefore the old poets had no ears.

‘But,’ say the gentlemen without the eyes, ‘the scholastic scansion, although certainly not handed down to us in form from the old poets themselves (the gentlemen without the ears), is nevertheless deduced from certain facts which are supplied us by careful observation of the old poems.’

And let us illustrate this strong position by an example from an American poet—who must be a poet of some eminence, or he will not answer the purpose. Let us take Mr. Alfred B. Street. I remember these two lines of his:

His sinuous path, by blazes, wound
Among trunks grouped in myriads round.

With the *sense* of these lines I have nothing to do. When a poet is in a ‘fine frenzy’, he may as well imagine a large forest as a small one ; and ‘by blazes’ is *not* intended for an oath. My concern is with the rhythm, which is iambic.

Now let us suppose that, a thousand years hence, when the ‘American language’ is dead, a learned prosodist should be deducing, from ‘careful observation’ of our best poets, a system of scansion for our poetry. And let us suppose that this prosodist had so little dependence in the generality and immutability of the laws of Nature, as to assume in the outset, that, because we lived a thousand years before his time, and made use of steam-engines instead of mesmeric balloons, we must therefore have had a *very* singular fashion of mouthing our vowels, and altogether of Hudsonizing our verse. And let us suppose that with these and other fundamental propositions carefully put away in his brain, he should arrive at the line,—

Among | trunks grouped | in my | riads round.

Finding it an obviously iambic rhythm, he would divide it as above ; and observing that ‘trunks’ made the first member of an iambus, he would call it short, as Mr. Street intended it to be. Now farther, if instead of admitting the possibility that Mr. Street (who by that time would be called Street simply, just as we say Homer)—that Mr. Street might have been in the habit of writing carelessly, as the poets of the prosodist’s own era did, and as all poets will do (on account of being geniuses),—instead of admitting this, suppose the learned scholar should make a ‘rule’ and put it in a book, to the effect that, in the American verse, the

vowel *u*, when found imbedded among nine consonants, was short, what, under such circumstances, would the sensible people of the scholar's day have a right not only to think but to say of that scholar?—why, that he was 'a fool—by blazes!'

I have put an extreme case, but it strikes at the root of the error. The 'rules' are grounded in 'authority'; and this 'authority'—can any one tell us what it means? or can any one suggest any thing that it may *not* mean? Is it not clear that the 'scholar' above referred to, might as readily have deduced from authority a totally false system as a partially true one? To deduce from authority a consistent prosody of the ancient metres would indeed have been within the limits of the barest possibility; and the task has *not* been accomplished, for the reason that it demands a species of ratiocination altogether out of keeping with the brain of a bookworm. A rigid scrutiny will show that the very few 'rules' which have not as many exceptions as examples, are those which have, by accident, their true bases not in authority, but in the omnipresent laws of syllabification; such, for example, as the rule which declares a vowel before two consonants to be long.

In a word, the gross confusion and antagonism of the scholastic prosody, as well as its marked inapplicability to the reading flow of the rhythms it pretends to illustrate, are attributable, first, to the utter absence of natural principle as a guide in the investigations which have been undertaken by inadequate men; and secondly, to the neglect of the obvious consideration that the ancient poems, which have been the *criterium* throughout, were the work of men who must have written as loosely, and with as little definitive system, as ourselves.

Were Horace alive to-day, he would divide for us his first Ode thus, and ‘make great eyes’ when assured by prosodists that he had no business to make any such division :—

Maecenas | atavis | edite | regibus |
 2 2 2 2 2 2
 O et præ | sidium et | dulce de | cus meum |
 2 2 3 3 3 2 2 2 2
 Sunt quos cur | riculo | pulverem O | lympicum |
 2 2 2 2 3 3 3 2 2
 Collegisse | juvat | metaque | fervidis |
 3 3 3 2 2 2 2
 Evitata | rotis | palmaque | nobilis |
 3 3 3 2 2 2 2
 Terrarum | dominos | evehit | ad Deos. |

Read by this scansion, the flow is preserved ; and the more we dwell on the divisions, the more the intended rhythm becomes apparent. Moreover, the feet have all the same time ; while, in the scholastic scansion, trochees—admitted trochees—are absurdly employed as equivalents to spondees and dactyls. The books declare, for instance, that *Colle*, which begins the fourth line, is a trochee, and seem to be gloriously unconscious that to put a trochee in opposition with a longer foot, is to violate the inviolable principle of all music, *time*.

It will be said, however, by ‘some people’, that I have no business to make a dactyl out of such obviously long syllables as *sunt*, *quos*, *cur*. Certainly I have no business to do so. I never do so. And Horace should not have done so. But he did. Mr. Bryant and Mr. Longfellow do the same thing every day. And merely because these gentlemen, now and then, forget themselves in this way, it would be hard if some future prosodist should insist upon twisting the ‘Thanatopsis’, or the ‘Spanish Student’, into a jumble of trochees, spondees, and dactyls.

It may be said, also, by some other people, that in the word *decus*, I have succeeded no better than the books, in making the scansional agree with the reading flow; and that *decus* was not pronounced *deku's*. I reply, that there can be no doubt of the word having been pronounced, in this case, *decus*. It must be observed, that the Latin inflection, or variation of a word in its terminating syllable, caused the Romans —*must* have caused them—to pay greater attention to the termination of a word than to its commencement, or than we do to the terminations of our words. The end of the Latin word established that relation of the word with other words which we establish by prepositions or auxiliary verbs. Therefore, it would seem infinitely less odd to them than it does to us, to dwell at any time, for any slight purpose, abnormally, on a terminating syllable. In verse, this license—scarcely a license—would be frequently admitted. These ideas unlock the secret of such lines as the

Litoreis ingens inventa sub illicibus suis,

and the

Parturiunt montes; nascetur ridiculus mus,

which I quoted, some time ago, while speaking of rhyme.

As regards the prosodial elisions, such as that of *rem* before *O*, in *pulverem Olympicum*, it is really difficult to understand how so dismally silly a notion could have entered the brain even of a pedant. Were it demanded of me why the books cut off one vowel before another, I might say: It is, perhaps, because the books think that, since a bad reader is so apt to slide the one vowel into the other at any rate, it is just as well to print them *ready-slided*. But in the case of the terminating *m*, which is the most readily

pronounced of all consonants (as the infantile *mamma* will testify), and the most impossible to cheat the ear of by any system of sliding—in the case of the *m*, I should be driven to reply that, to the best of my belief, the prosodists did the thing, because they had a fancy for doing it, and wished to see how funny it would look after it was done. The thinking reader will perceive that, from the great facility with which *em* may be enunciated, it is admirably suited to form one of the rapid short syllables in the bastard dactyl (*pulverem O*) ; but because the books had no conception of a bastard dactyl, they knocked it on the head at once—by cutting off its tail !

Let me now give a specimen of the true scansion of another Horatian measure—embodying an instance of proper elision.

Integer	vitae	scelerisque	purus
_{2 2}		_{3 3 3}	
Non eget	Mauri	jaculis ne	que arcu
_{2 2}		_{3 3 3}	
Nec vene	natis	gravida sa	gittis
_{2 2}		_{3 3 3}	
Fusce pha	retrâ.		
_{2 2}			

Here the regular recurrence of the bastard dactyl gives great animation to the rhythm. The *e* before the *a* in *que arcu*, is, almost of sheer necessity, cut off—that is to say, run into the *a* so as to preserve the spondee. But even this license it would have been better not to take.

Had I space, nothing would afford me greater pleasure than to proceed with the scansion of *all* the ancient rhythms, and to show how easily, by the help of common-sense, the intended music of each and all can be rendered instantaneously apparent. But I have already overstepped my limits, and must bring this paper to an end.

It will never do, however, to omit all mention of the heroic hexameter.

I began the ‘processes’ by a suggestion of the spondee as the first step toward verse. But the innate monotony of the spondee has caused its disappearance, as the basis of rhythm, from all modern poetry. We *may* say, indeed, that the French heroic—the most wretchedly monotonous verse in existence—is, to all intents and purposes, spondaic. But it is not designedly spondaic—and if the French were ever to examine it at all, they would no doubt pronounce it iambic. It must be observed that the French language is strangely peculiar in this point—that *it is without accentuation, and consequently without verse*. The genius of the people, rather than the structure of the tongue, declares that their words are, for the most part, enunciated with a uniform dwelling on each syllable. For example, we say ‘syllabification’. A Frenchman would say syl-la-bi-fi-ca-ti-on; dwelling on no one of the syllables with any noticeable particularity. Here again I put an extreme case, in order to be well understood; but the general fact is as I give it—that, comparatively, the French have *no* accentuation. And there can be nothing worth the name of verse without. Therefore, the French have no verse worth the name—which is the fact, put in sufficiently plain terms. Their iambic rhythm so superabounds in absolute spondees, as to warrant me in calling its basis spondaic; but French is the *only* modern tongue which has any rhythm with such basis; and even in the French, it is, as I have said, unintentional.

Admitting, however, the validity of my suggestion, that the spondee was the first approach to verse, we should expect to find, first, natural spondees (words

each forming just a spondee) most abundant in the most ancient languages; and, secondly, we should expect to find spondees forming the basis of the most ancient rhythms. These expectations are in both cases confirmed.

Of the Greek hexameter, the intentional basis is spondaic. The dactyls are the *variation* of the theme. It will be observed that there is no absolute certainty about *their* points of interposition. The penultimate foot, it is true, is usually a dactyl; but not uniformly so; while the ultimate, on which the ear *lingers*, is always a spondee. Even that the penultimate is usually a dactyl may be clearly referred to the necessity of winding up with the *distinctive* spondee. In corroboration of this idea, again, we should look to find the penultimate spondee most usual in the most ancient verse; and, accordingly, we find it more frequent in the Greek than in the Latin hexameter.

But besides all this, spondees are not only more prevalent in the heroic hexameter than dactyls, but occur to such an extent as is even unpleasant to modern ears, on account of monotony. What the modern chiefly appreciates and admires in the Greek hexameter, is the *melody of the abundant vowel sounds*. The Latin hexameters *really* please very few moderns—although so many pretend to fall into ecstasies about them. In the hexameters quoted, several pages ago, from Silius Italicus, the preponderance of the spondee is strikingly manifest. Besides the natural spondees of the Greek and Latin, numerous artificial ones arise in the verse of these tongues on account of the tendency which inflection has to throw full accentuation on terminal syllables; and the preponderance of the spondee is farther insured by the comparative infrequency of the small prepositions which we have to

serve us *instead* of case, and also the absence of the diminutive auxiliary verbs with which we have to eke out the expression of our primary ones. These are the monosyllables whose abundance serve to stamp the poetic genius of a language as tripping or dactylic.

Now, paying no attention to these facts, Sir Philip Sidney, Professor Longfellow, and innumerable other persons more or less modern, have busied themselves in constructing what they suppose to be ‘English hexameters on the model of the Greek’. The only difficulty was that (even leaving out of question the melodious masses of vowels) these gentlemen never could get their English hexameters to *soun'l* Greek. Did they *look* Greek?—that should have been the query; and the reply might have led to a solution of the riddle. In placing a copy of ancient hexameters side by side with a copy (in similar type) of such hexameters as Professor Longfellow, or Professor Felton, or the Frogpondian Professors collectively, are in the shameful practice of composing ‘on the model of the Greek’, it will be seen that the latter (hexameters, not professors) are about one third longer *to the eye*, on an average, than the former. The more abundant dactyls make the difference. And it is the greater number of spondees in the Greek than in the English—in the ancient than in the modern tongue—which has caused it to fall out that while these eminent scholars were groping about in the dark for a Greek hexameter, which is a spondaic rhythm varied now and then by dactyls, they merely stumbled, to the lasting scandal of scholarship, over something which, on account of its long-leggedness, we may as well term a Feltonian hexameter, and which is a dactylic rhythm, interrupted, rarely, by artificial spondees which are no spondees at all, and which

are curiously thrown in by the heels at all kinds of improper and impertinent points.

Here is a specimen of the Longfellowian hexameter.

Also the | church with | in was a | dorned for | this was
the | season
In which the | young their | parents' | hope and the | loved
ones of | Heaven |
Should at the | foot of the | altar re | new the | vows of
their | baptism |
Therefore each | nook and | corner was | swept and |
cleaned and the | dust was |
Blown from the | walls and | ceiling and | from the | oil-
painted | benches |

Mr. Longfellow is a man of imagination—but can he imagine that any individual, with a proper understanding of the danger of lock-jaw, would make the attempt of twisting his mouth into the shape necessary for the emission of such spondees as ‘parents’, and ‘from the’, or such dactyls as ‘cleaned and the’, and ‘loved ones of’? ‘Baptism’ is by no means a bad spondee—perhaps because it happens to be a dactyl;—of all the rest, however, I am dreadfully ashamed.

But these feet—dactyls and spondees, all together—should thus be put at once into their proper position :

‘Also, the church within was adorned ; for this was the season in which the young, their parents’ hope, and the loved ones of Heaven, should, at the foot of the altar, renew the vows of their baptism. Therefore each nook and corner was swept and cleaned ; and the dust was blown from the walls and ceiling, and from the oil-painted benches.’

There!—That is respectable prose ; and it will incur no danger of ever getting its character ruined by anybody’s mistaking it for verse.

But even when we let these modern hexameters go, as Greek, and merely hold them fast in their proper character of Longfellowian, or Feltonian, or Frog-pondian, we must still condemn them as having been committed in a radical misconception of the philosophy of verse. The spondee, as I observed, is the *theme* of the Greek line. Most of the ancient hexameters *begin* with spondees, for the reason that the spondee *is* the theme; and the ear is filled with it as with a burden. Now the Feltonian dactylies have, in the same way, dactyls for the theme, and most of them begin with dactyls—which is all very proper if not very Greek,—but, unhappily, the one point at which they *are* very Greek is that point, precisely, at which they should be nothing but Feltonian. They always *close* with what is meant for a spondee. To be consistently silly, they should die off in a dactyl.

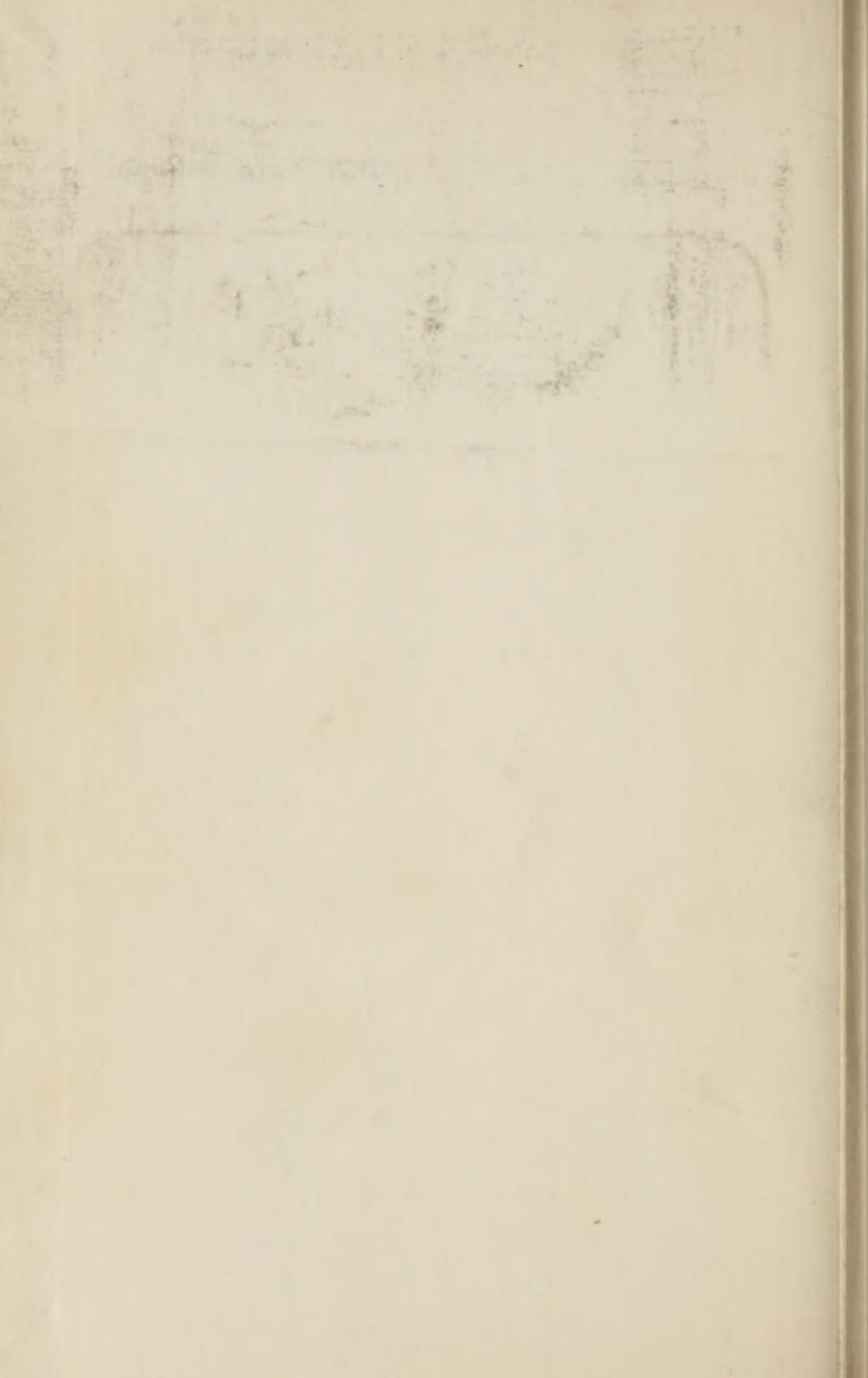
That a truly Greek hexameter *cannot*, however, be readily composed in English, is a proposition which I am by no means inclined to admit. I think I could manage the point myself. For example:

Do tell! | when may we | hope to make | men of sense |
out of the | Pundits |
Born and brought | up with their | snouts deep | down in
the | mud of the | Frog-pond? |
Why ask? | who ever | yet saw | money made | out of a |
fat old |
Jew, or | downright | upright nutmegs | out of a | pine-
knot? |

The proper spondee predominance is here preserved. Some of the dactyls are not so good as I could wish—but, upon the whole, the rhythm is very decent—to say nothing of its excellent sense.

0-759-434





POE, E.A.

PS
2605
.J6 .

Works ed. by R. B. Johnson.

